

Community Services Block Grant Performance Measures Report Fiscal Year 2004 - 2005



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Massachusetts CSBG Performance Measures Report

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FROM THE DESK OF DIRECTOR JANE WALLIS GUMBLE

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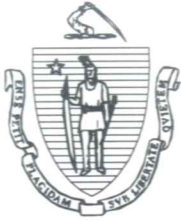
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Mitt Romney, Governor ♦ Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor ♦ Jane Wallis Gumble, Director

From the Desk of Director Jane Wallis Gumble

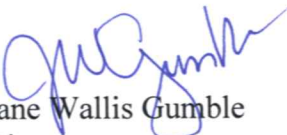
August 2006

I am pleased to present the fiscal year 2004 – 2005 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Performance Measure Report. Through a network of 24 community action agencies (CAAs) in Massachusetts, CSBG, in conjunction with other private and public investments, helps thousands of residents during their journey from poverty to self-sufficiency. Each year, in addition to these public investments, donations from the private sector, local fundraising, grants from foundations, corporations and non-profit organizations, as well as the CAAs own funds, help create opportunities for many; which include employment, employment support, income enhancements, income maximization, housing services, homeownerships, transportation, childcare, health care enrollments, heating assistance and several other types of emergency services. These services are vital to our mission of moving people from poverty to self-sufficiency.

This report has been developed in an effort to demonstrate the effectiveness of DHCD programs and its network of community action agencies in Massachusetts. As outlined in this report, during fiscal year 2005 a total of 459,00 individuals received services through the CAA network by utilizing over \$485 million in private and public investments. During Fiscal Year 2005, DHCD invested \$14.17 million in CSBG, \$133,906 in CSBG special projects, and over \$100 million in federal and state energy assistance program funds in the Massachusetts CAA network.

I thank the CAA network and acknowledge their dedication in fulfilling the DHCD mission.

Sincerely,


Jane Wallis Gumble
Director

JWG/AR/dlm

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INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Performance Measure Report highlights its effort in fulfilling its mission and the following goals and strategies of the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program:

The purposes of the Community Services Block Grant are to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and to empower low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient.

The CSBG legislation mandates the use of nine strategies:

1. *Strengthen community capabilities for planning and coordinating the use of a broad range of resources: federal, state, local, including private resources.*
2. *Increase use of innovative and effective community-based approaches.*
3. *Maximize participation of residents of low-income communities and groups served, and empower them to respond to community problems and needs.*
4. *Broaden the resource base of programs directed to the elimination of poverty; secure a more active role for citizens, organizations, and groups.*
5. *Achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community, especially through grassroots partnerships with public and private partners.*
6. *Make more effective use of and coordinate with other related programs.*
7. *Coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and other social service programs.*
8. *Provide a range of services and activities, especially youth development programs.*
9. *Provide emergency direct services.*

As the governing agency for the CSBG program in Massachusetts, DHCD is committed to a results-oriented environment for its subgrantees, the 24 non-profit Community Action Agencies. CAAs track programmatic and organizational outcomes through a National Indicator framework. These National Indicators assist the CAAs in demonstrating quantitatively the positive changes made in the lives of low-income Massachusetts residents through or as a result of CAA programs. These Community Action Agencies are actually at the forefront of bringing positive changes in the lives of many low-income Massachusetts residents.

CAAs in Massachusetts are the eligible entities that receive CSBG funds to carry out program and activities in their designated service areas. Almost 100% of all Massachusetts counties and most of the cities and towns have a CAA representation. Out of 351 cities and towns, 221 are part of a CAA designated service area. Out of the remaining 130 cities and towns, 125 are served by CAAs through other federal, state, and privately funded programs.

In this report, DHCD has attempted to demonstrate how the nine CSBG strategies are currently *at work* - individually at each CAA and collectively throughout the network by assisting low-income people to become aware of income management strategies, meeting their emergency needs, training for and finding employment, moving them

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from substandard to a more stable housing, and meeting the child care needs of working families. All of which are part of a comprehensive poverty alleviation strategy.

As background research, DHCD reviewed information from a number of sources¹, including its annual CSBG Information System Survey that collects fiscal, client demographic, and program outcome data from each of the 24 CAAs. Each year, DHCD aggregates and analyzes this data before it is presented in the form of this Performance Measure Report and submitted to its funding source, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This report also offers an annual accounting of CSBG and other federal, state, local public, and private resources received by the CAA network. Besides CSBG, Massachusetts CAAs receive millions of dollars in funding from state, federal, local public and private sector entities. Each year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides the majority of federal funding to CAAs, followed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and U.S. Department of Agriculture. During fiscal year 2005, CAAs reported a total of \$307.67 million in federal funding. Some of these major federally funded programs include:

- ✚ Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or fuel assistance for Massachusetts residents to defray their heating cost during winter months.
- ✚ Heating system repairs and replacements.
- ✚ Weatherization assistance.
- ✚ Pre-natal and post-partum nutritional assistance for women and their children through the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program.
- ✚ Early childhood education through Head Start and several different types of child care and day care programs.
- ✚ Housing subsidy and housing assistance through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- ✚ Workforce training and development.
- ✚ Literacy and vocational education.

An additional \$115.53 million in state funds were also invested in the CAA network for child care, housing and homeless prevention, health, energy and education related programs. For the first time in many years, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

¹ Including the U.S. Census.

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allocated a total of \$7.5 million in state energy funds in fiscal year 2005, to off-set rising home heating costs and to reduce energy burden of low-income residents. A majority, approximately \$6.6 of the \$7.5 million of state energy allocation was distributed by 19 Massachusetts CAAs to 119,721 fuel assistance eligible households.

During fiscal year 2005, with \$14.17 million dollars in CSBG investments, the CAA network in Massachusetts leveraged a total of \$471.55 million in other federal, state, private and local public resources which in turn allowed CAAs to create opportunities for 459,339 individuals from 229,971 families or households.

Private sector resources comprise almost 50% of the state funding, which includes corporations and foundations, fees paid by clients, and in-kinds contribution. Major corporations, foundations, and other non-profit agencies contributed a total of \$28 million which is almost 48% of all private funds raised by the CAA network.

During the development of this Performance Measure Report, DHCD, where applicable, compared the fiscal year 2005 data with the last two fiscal years and analyzed client demographic trends. For program outcome data, DHCD relied primarily on the following 12 new National Indicators of Community Action Performance:

National Performance Indicator 1.1 - Employment

- ✚ The number and percentage of low-income participants in community action employment initiatives who get a job or become self-employed.

National Performance Indicator 1.2 - Employment Supports

- ✚ The number of low-income participants for whom barriers to initial or continuous employment are reduced or eliminated through assistance from community action.

National Performance Indicator 1.3 - Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization

- ✚ The number and percentage of low-income households that achieve an increase in financial assets and/or financial skills as a result of community action assistance, and the aggregated amount of those assets and resources for all participants achieving the outcome.

National Performance Indicator 2.1 Community Improvement and Revitalization

- ✚ Increase in, or safeguarding of threatened opportunities and community resources or services for low-income people in the community as a result of community action projects/initiatives or advocacy with other public and private agencies.

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National Performance Indicator 2.2 – Community Quality of Life and Assets

- ✚ The quality of life and assets in low-income neighborhoods are improved by community action initiative or advocacy.

National Performance Indicator 3.1 – Civic Involvement

- ✚ The number of volunteer hours donated to community action.

National Performance Indicator 3.2 – Community Empowerment through Maximum Feasible Participation

- ✚ The number of low-income people mobilized as a direct result of community action initiative to engage in activities that support and promote their own well-being and that of their community activities or groups created or supported by community action.

National Performance Indicator 4.1 – Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships

- ✚ The number of organizations, both public and private, community action actively works with to expand resources and opportunities in order to achieve family and community outcomes.

National Performance Indicator 5.1 – Broadening the Resource Base

- ✚ The number of dollars mobilized by community action, including amounts and percentages.

National Performance Indicator 6.1 – Independent Living

- ✚ The number of vulnerable individuals receiving services from community action that maintain an independent living situation as a result of those services.

National Performance Indicator 6.2 – Emergency Assistance

- ✚ The number of low-income individuals or families served by community action that sought emergency assistance and the percentage of those households for which assistance was provided.

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National Performance Indicator 6.3 – Child and Family Development

- ✚ The number and percentage of all infants, children, youth, parents, and other adults participating in developmental or enrichment programs that achieve program goals.

These 12 National Indicators have been designed to measure the performance of over 1,000 Community Action Agencies nationwide in the areas of: Employment; Employment Supports; Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization; Community Improvement and Revitalization; Community Quality of Life and Assets; Civic Involvement; Community Empowerment; Community Partnerships; Capacity Building; Independent Living; Emergency Assistance; and Child and Family Development. Besides these 12 National Indicators CAAs often use their own customized outcomes, otherwise known as *Agency Projected Outcomes*. In the future some of these outcomes will be aggregated into a statewide reporting format. However, there are many Agency Projected Outcomes that are not suitable for statewide aggregation; yet tell a very compelling story at the local levels.

DHCD is working collaboratively with the CAA network and their trade association the Massachusetts Community Action Programs (MASSCAP) in areas of quality assurance, peer-to-peer technical assistance and assessment, community action planning, and the implementation of the 12 National Indicators.

The implementation of the overall Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) initiative for the CSBG program is a collaborative effort between DHCD and each of the 24 CAAs. The Massachusetts CAA network is also a member of a tri-state regional and many national community service networks. Collectively, the community services network serves the nation's most vulnerable population during their transition from poverty to self-sufficiency and therefore it is critical for everyone to demonstrate results using the National Indicator framework. If used effectively, this new framework can roll up results from local to state to national levels – demonstrating results at each and all levels.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE





The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is a state agency established by Chapter 23B of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws.

DHCD's mission is to strengthen cities, towns, and neighborhoods and enhance the quality of life of Massachusetts's residents. To accomplish this mission, DHCD provides leadership, professional assistance, and financial resources to promote safe, decent affordable housing opportunities, economic vitality of communities and sound municipal management. DHCD forges partnerships with regional and local governments, public agencies, community-based

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organizations, and the business community to achieve common goals and objectives. In all of these efforts, DHCD recognizes and respects the diverse needs, circumstances, and characteristics of individuals and communities. DHCD is committed to: programs and funding that target populations of low- to moderate-incomes and those with special needs; coordinated, integrated and balanced agency responses to address the comprehensive needs and interests of communities; programs and technical assistance designed to facilitate informed decision-making at the local level, and to encourage self-sufficiency of residents and communities; and sound business practices that ensure the highest standards of public accountability and responsibility.

DHCD implements its mission of strengthening cities, towns, and neighborhoods and enhancing the quality of life of Massachusetts's residents through its:

-  Office of the Director,
-  Office of the Deputy Director for Policy Development,
-  Office of the Chief Counsel, and
-  Office of Administration and Finance

DHCD is responsible for a diversity of programs and services that are administered through three divisions and several commissions.

-  Division of Community Services
-  Division of Housing Development
-  Division of Public Housing and Rental Assistance

DHCD's success relies on providing more efficient, expedited, and accountable services to its customers: municipal governments, non-profit and quasi public organizations and many low- and moderate-income residents of the Commonwealth.

The agency works to link housing, transportation, jobs, and environment into a strategy of comprehensive development for the Commonwealth, which is also known as the Sustainable Development Principles. These Principles are:

1. Redevelop First.

Support the revitalization of town centers and neighborhoods. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure rather than the construction of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas. Give preference to redevelopment of brownfields, preservation and reuse of historic structures and rehabilitation of existing housing and schools.

2. Concentrate Development.

Support development that is compact, conserves land, integrates uses, and fosters a sense of place. Create walkable districts mixing commercial, civic, cultural,

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educational and recreational activities with open space and housing for diverse communities.

3. Be Fair.

Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice. Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, transparent, cost-effective, and oriented to encourage smart growth and regional equity.

4. Restore and Enhance the Environment.

Expand land and water conservation. Protect and restore environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, wildlife habitats, and cultural and historic landscapes. Increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. Preserve critical habitat and bio-diversity. Promote developments that respect and enhance the state's natural resources.

5. Conserve Natural Resources.

Increase our supply of renewable energy and reduce waste of water, energy and materials. Lead by example and support conservation strategies, clean power and innovative industries. Construct and promote buildings and infrastructure that use land, energy, water and materials efficiently.

6. Expand Housing Opportunities.

Support the construction and rehabilitation of housing to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels and household types. Coordinate the provision of housing with the location of jobs, transit and services. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily, that is compatible with a community's character and vision.

7. Provide Transportation Choice.

Increase access to transportation options, in all communities, including land and water based public transit, bicycling, and walking. Invest strategically in transportation infrastructure to encourage smart growth. Locate new development where a variety of transportation modes can be made available.

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8. Increase Job Opportunities.

Attract businesses to locations near housing, infrastructure, water, and transportation options. Expand access to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. Support the growth of new and existing local businesses.

9. Foster Sustainable Businesses.

Strengthen sustainable natural resource-based businesses, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Strengthen sustainable businesses. Support economic development in industry clusters consistent with regional and local character. Maintain reliable and affordable energy sources and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels.

10. Plan Regionally.

Support the development and implementation of local and regional plans that have broad public support and are consistent with these principles. Foster development projects, land and water conservation, transportation and housing that have a regional or multi-community benefit. Consider the long-term costs and benefits to the larger commonwealth.

The Director of DHCD is appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth to administer and maintain executive authority over all phases of departmental activities and coordinate policy with the Governor and the rest of the Administration. The Office of the Director includes the Office of the Chief of Staff, the Office of the Deputy Director for Policy Development, the Communications Office, the Office of the Chief Counsel, the Office of Administration and Finance, and the Office of Sustainable Development.

DHCD serves many residents, non-profit organizations, local housing authorities, private and non-profit housing developers, and municipal governments across the Commonwealth. There are also several commissions and quasi-public agencies affiliated with DHCD such as, the Housing Appeals Committee, Commission on Indian Affairs, Manufactured Housing Commission, Community Development Finance Corporation, Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation, Massachusetts Housing, and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership Fund.

THE COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)









The Department has been designated by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to serve as the lead agency under the CSBG Act. Since 1984, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development has been administering the CSBG program in Massachusetts. The Community Services Unit within the Division of Community Services is responsible for administering CSBG

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and many other community services and community development grant programs, such as the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or fuel assistance, U.S. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program, and the LIHEAP Weatherization, which is locally known as the Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP).

Each year, on behalf of the Governor of the Commonwealth the Director of DHCD provides written assurances to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that the state will meet assurances set forth in the Community Services Block Grant Act. One of the major assurances is that the State will make CSBG funds available -

"to support activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals, including families and individuals receiving assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farmworkers, and elderly low-income individuals and families to enable the families and individuals to:

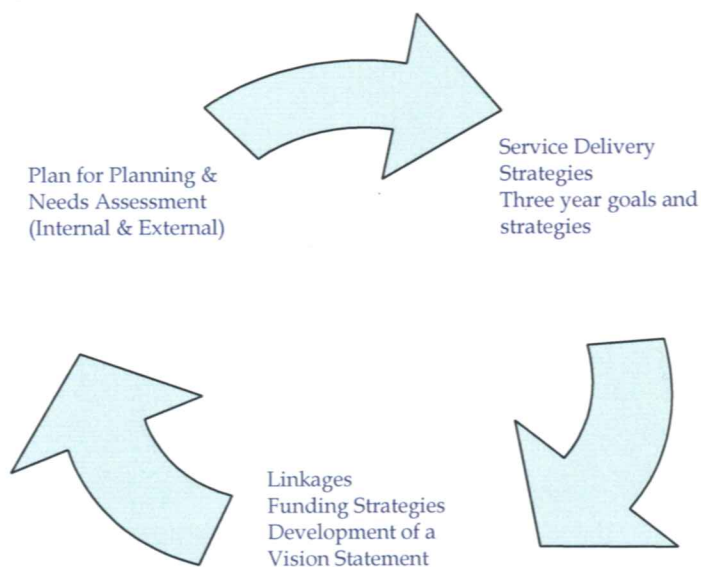
-  *Remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency...*
-  *Secure and retain meaningful employment...*
-  *Attain an adequate education...*
-  *Make a better use of available income...*
-  *Obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment...*
-  *Obtain emergency assistance through loans, grants and other means to meet immediate and urgent family and individual needs...*
-  *Achieve greater participation in the affairs of the communities involved... and*
-  *To address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs..."*

Community Action Planning

In order to ensure the implementation of these and all other CSBG assurances, DHCD has for many years relied on a CAA Community Action Planning or strategic planning process. Every three year, using a DHCD recommended planning model, each of the 24 CAAs goes through an extensive Community Action Planning process. DHCD's recommended planning model relies on a number of widely accepted

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planning principles². This allows CAAs to meet the strategic planning mandate³ of the ROMA Act, and at the same time gives them the flexibility necessary for meaningful local level planning. The Community Action Planning process extends over an eight to nine month period, during which CAAs devote their time in completing the following steps:



At the onset of their planning process, each CAA prepares and submits a *Plan for Planning* outline that usually includes a brief description of board and staff committees, internal timeframes, budget (if applicable), and copies of internal and community needs assessment survey tools.

As soon as the *Plan for Planning* process is approved by DHCD, CAAs begin their *Needs Assessment* process, which usually comprises board and staff surveys; community needs assessments, involving client surveys, focus groups, stakeholders' survey; and a review of existing planning documents pertaining to the community served by a specific CAA.

As part of their planning process, CAAs evaluate their programs and services and develop *Service Delivery Strategies* or a description of how services will be delivered during each of the three plan implementation years. During fiscal year 2004 and 2005, CAAs developed their Community Action Plan, which will be used to develop their Annual Application for CSBG funds for the next three fiscal years. These Community

² Among others, DHCD's planning model relies on SWOT or Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis.

³ See ROMA act regarding planning.

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Action Plans not only document the needs for services and a strategic service delivery processes but also support CAA fundraising initiatives.

Like any strategic planning process, goal setting is an essential component of DHCD's Community Action Planning Process. DHCD requires that CAAs set their goals and develop strategies, first based on the 12 new National Indicators of Community Action Performance and then any local level or customized outcome measures, which is also known as *Agency Projected Outcomes* among Massachusetts CAAs. Goals and Strategies developed during the planning process are then converted into program level activities during CSBG annual application or workplan development process.

In the *Linkages* section, CAAs develop an analysis of how services will be coordinated with other local and regional providers, existing CAA coalitions and partners, and most importantly a description of strategies that the CAA would employ over the next three years in meeting their unmet community needs. In other words, a well developed linkage statement should include coalition and partnership building strategies particularly around service delivery of existing and any new programs.

Funding Strategies – this section involves an analysis of current funding scenarios, resource development goals and strategies, and the use of CSBG in relation to other federal and non-federal resources.

Vision Statement – development of a CAA Vision Statement encompassing “lesson learned” from the current planning process that includes goals for improving services, organizational capacity, and community involvement and partnerships.

Among all the other ROMA-related documents, DHCD considers the Community Action Plan as a crucial one and invests a lot of staff time and technical expertise to facilitate CAAs' smooth transition from one three year planning cycle to other. DHCD strongly believes and adheres to a principle that the Community Action Plans are the entry point for all CAA plans and activities. Furthermore, with an ever changing funding environment in the backdrop, DHCD encourages CAAs to review and update their Community Action Plan on an annual basis.

These three-year Community Action Plans, the Massachusetts Consolidated State Plan, and CSBG grant applications guide the implementation of CSBG in Massachusetts.

Funding Summary - Federal Allocation

Each year, DHCD receives CSBG funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, which in turn is distributed (based on a historic funding formula), to the Commonwealth's network of 24 Community Action Agencies (CAAs).

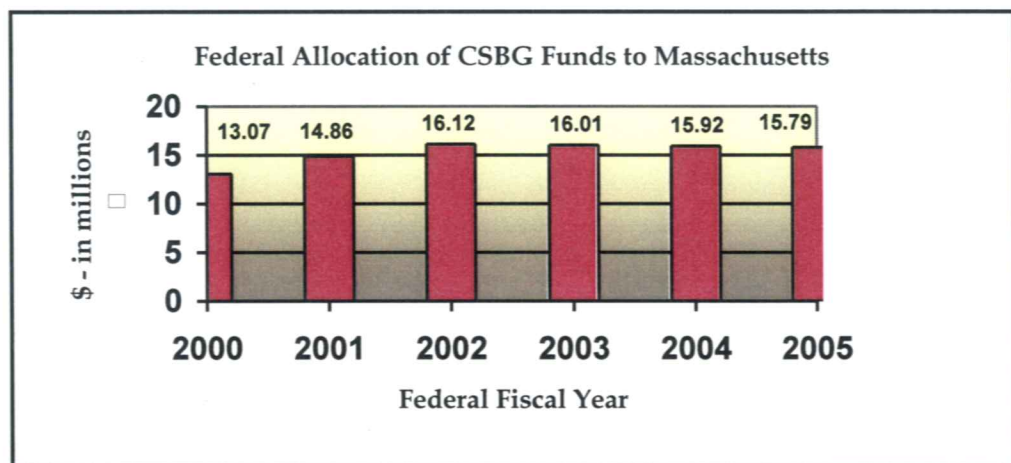
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During the federal fiscal year 2004 (October 1, 2003 through September 2004), Congress authorized approximately \$631.79 million in CSBG funds and most of which was distributed to States and U.S. territories. Remaining funds were allocated to various Native American tribes under a tribal allocation category. Most of the tribal allocations were made to states with significant American Indian populations such as Alaska, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington. Only two New England Native American tribes, the Passamaquoddy tribe in Vermont and Narragansett Indian tribe in Rhode Island received CSBG funds.

The overall CSBG allocation remained almost the same in fiscal year 2005 with a slight overall reduction to a nationwide allocation of \$626.72 million.

Based on the federal allocation, during fiscal year 2004, the Commonwealth's share of CSBG was \$15.92 million. For fiscal years 2004 and 2005 there had been a slight nationwide reduction of CSBG funds⁴. The following table shows federal allocation of CSBG funds to Massachusetts for the last five federal fiscal years:

Chart 1: CSBG Allocations



The five year trends in federal allocation of CSBG funds show stability. As with any analysis, past trends cannot accurately predict the future, particularly in areas of budgetary allocation. For example, in FY 2006, after many cuts and counter cuts, the CSBG funding was restored to FY 2005 level.

⁴ Nationwide the CSBG allocation was reduced from \$635.56 in FY 2003 to \$631.25 in FY 2004 to \$626.72 million in FY 2005.

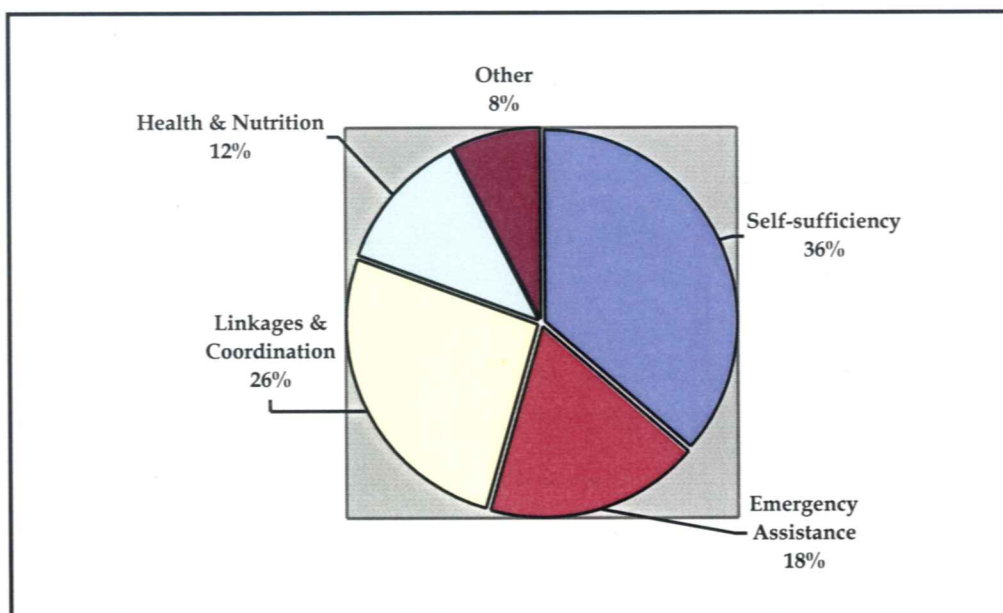
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Massachusetts CSBG Funding

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Statute mandates that DHCD must distribute a minimum of 90% of this allocation to eligible entities, which are the 24 CAAs in Massachusetts. Of the remaining 10%, five percent (5%) is distributed among CAAs and other Community Based Organizations (CBOs) as discretionary grants and a maximum of 5% of the total state allocation was retained for administrative purposes. DHCD allocated a total of \$14.33 million in CSBG funds in fiscal year 2004 and \$14.14 million in fiscal year 2005 directly to CAAs, which were utilized by CAAs according to the following purposes⁵:

- Self-Sufficiency (including Employment, Education, and Housing) - 36%
- Emergency Services and Income Management - 18%
- Linkages and Coordination of Services including Youth and Seniors - 26%
- Health and Nutrition - 12%
- Other (including capacity building) - 8%

Chart 2: Distribution of CSBG Funds



Since 90% of the Massachusetts' CSBG allocation goes directly to the 24 CAAs, any future cuts will surely make a significant impact on their services for approximately 450,000 - 460,000 low-income individuals annually. Based on the use of CSBG funds,

⁵ Actual allocation of CSBG funds was consolidated into six major categories.

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it can be safely assumed that all types of self-sufficiency and emergency assistance programs will get adversely affected by any future cuts.

As noted above, a maximum of 5% of the total CSBG allocation for Massachusetts is utilized to pay for DHCD's expenses directly related to the administration of the CSBG program, including training and technical assistance and monitoring of subgrantee CAAs. During fiscal year 2004, CSBG administrative funds allowed DHCD to partially support 11 DHCD staff or 7.45 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff persons. In fiscal year 2005, CSBG partially supported 15 or 8.12 FTE staff; an indication of *doing more with less*.

Discretionary Allocation

In addition to this formula-based CSBG allocation to CAAs, the Director of DHCD at her discretion, awards CSBG special projects or discretionary grants, primarily to CAAs and other non-profit organizations to initiate or continue many demonstration projects. Over the years, DHCD has been able to take the lead in initiating many major demonstration projects aimed at reducing the *digital divide*⁶, scholarships for educational and vocational training, housing services for elders, self-sufficiency projects, job readiness training, and Individual Development Accounts or IDAs. Quite a few of these initiatives continued beyond their demonstration phase and became self-sustaining. However, during the *take off* phase, many of these projects relied solely on CSBG special projects or discretionary grants.

During fiscal year 2004 - 2005, DHCD continued its commitment in providing these much needed resources for the purpose of supporting many innovative initiatives in Massachusetts. In 2004, DHCD granted a total of \$590,550 in CSBG discretionary funds to CAAs and other Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to implement many demonstration projects. An additional \$601,950 was allocated in 2005. The Distribution of the CSBG discretionary funds was as follows:

- 🚩 **Economic Development Projects - 3.10%**
Youth Enterprise Development - one project
- 🚩 **Education and Literacy for Low-Income Residents - 20.62%**
Post Secondary and/or Vocational Educational Scholarships - 13 projects
Clemente Course in Humanities - one project
- 🚩 **Provision of Emergency Services - 9.55%**
Homelessness Prevention - one project
Victim Assistance - one project

⁶ In common parlance, digital divide is understood as the gap that exists between those who have and those who do not have access to technology (telephones, computers, Internet access) and related services.

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- ✚ **Employment and Training - 11.47%**
Workforce Development - one project
- ✚ **Housing Assistance - 4.57%**
Supportive Housing for People with AIDS - one project
Affordable Housing Capacity Building - one project
- ✚ **Capacity Building Including Assistance to MASSCAP and NIQA⁷ - 32.02%**
MASSCAP Northeast Institute for Quality Assurance - one project
MASSCAP Resource Development - one project
CDC Capacity Building - two projects
CAA Capacity Building - one project
- ✚ **Crime Prevention- 7.59%**
Neighborhood Crime Prevention Initiative - one project
- ✚ **Individual Development Accounts - 7.05%**
Asset Development Initiative Including IDAs - two projects
- ✚ **Other - 4.03%**
IT Capacity Building - one project

Demographic Characteristics of People Served

According to published reports from the 2000 Census, Massachusetts' total population in April 2000 was approximately 6.35 million. Compared to 1990 Census, the Massachusetts population grew by 5.53% or by 332,672 people. However, most recent Census estimates show that the Massachusetts population continues to rise but at a slower pace. Based on the Census Bureau population estimates for 2004, it can be inferred that between 2000 and 2004, Massachusetts gained only 67,000 people. This small stagnant population growth indicates that more and more people are moving out of Massachusetts. The high cost of living could be one of the major reasons for people moving out of Massachusetts. The Census Bureau estimate for 2005 was 6.39 million people - a net loss of 8,639 people compared to 2004.

⁷ Massachusetts Community Action Program Association and Northeast Institute for Quality Assurance.

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Table 1: Massachusetts Population Estimates⁸

Year	Population Estimates (people)
2000	6,349,097
2001	6,394,750
2002	6,411,568
2003	6,417,565
2004	6,407,382
2005	6,398,743

In terms of poverty population, according to the 2000 Census, 9.3% of the individuals in Massachusetts were at or below 100% of federal poverty level and 6.7% of Massachusetts families lived below the poverty level. During 2004, CAAs served a total of 445,725 of individuals from 223,673 families. In 2005, CAAs served 459,339 from 229,971 families. In 2005, CAAs served 13,614 or 3% more individuals compared to 2004.

DHCD analysis shows that an overwhelming number of families served live in abject poverty. For example, 27% of the families served were at or below 50% of federal poverty level, which is also known as "very low-income" group.

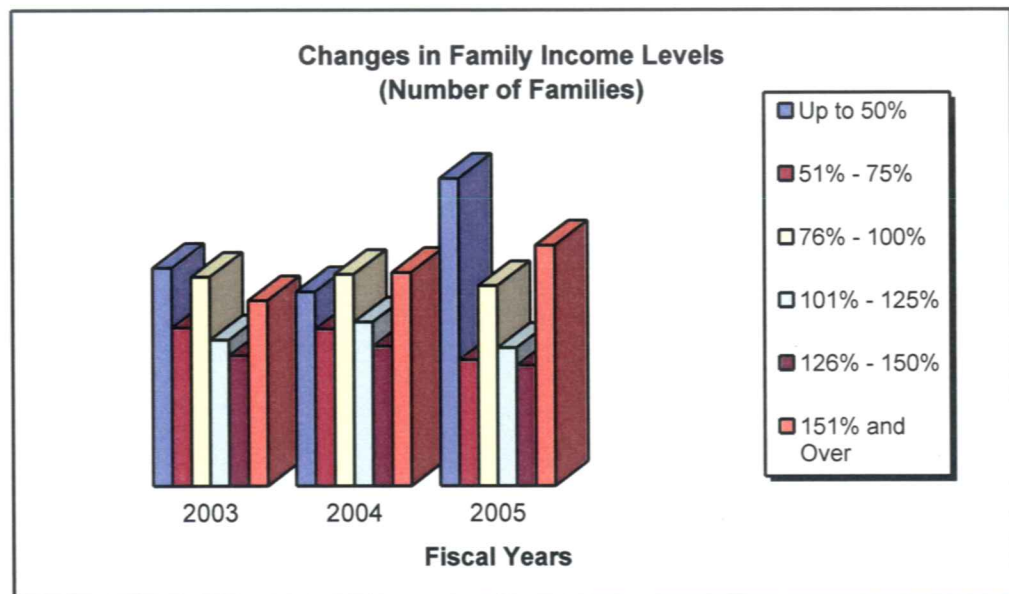
<u>Federal Poverty Levels -</u>	<u>Percent of Massachusetts Households Served</u>
◇ Up to 50% -	27%
◇ 51% - 75% -	11%
◇ 76% - 100% -	18%
◇ 101%- 125% -	12%
◇ 126%- 150% -	11%
◇ 151%- 200% -	21%

During fiscal years 2004 and 2005, DHCD did not notice any statistically significant change in families served. However 19,741 more families reported income fell within the "very low-income" range. A four year historical analysis shows a slight increase in families served through the CAA network. Since 2003, the client population has been increasing but only by 6,000 to 7,000 families per year. However, there has been a significant difference in family income levels of the population served. CAAs are serving more and more families from the "very low-income" group is one of such trends.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau estimates. The population shown for year 2000 is the actual count from U.S. Census.

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Chart 3: Changes in Family Income Levels of CAA clients – 2001 through 2005



Families account for a significant number of CAA client types. As noted elsewhere, during fiscal year 2004, a total of 223,673 families received services from CAAs. More than 1/3 of these families were headed by single parent female head of households. Seventeen percent of the families were two parent households. Single person households comprised close to 1/3 of all families served in Massachusetts. DHCD analysis further shows that these families primarily derived income from wages and some combination of public assistance. Thirty percent of the families derived income from wages only. Approximately 14% of all families served reported no income according to data reported by CAAs. During fiscal year 2005, DHCD noticed a significant increase in "no income" families. Of the 213,093 families who reported one or more sources of income, 48,516 fell within the no income group. The no income families grew by approximately 77% in 2005 compared to 2004.⁹ In 2004, 14.30% of families reporting income sources identified themselves with the no income group – this number increased to 22.77% in 2005.

Elderly and children continue to remain as two major client groups for CAAs in Massachusetts. During fiscal year 2005, CAAs served a total of 172,366 children under the age of 18, which is approximately 40% of all individual for whom age was calculated. It is often difficult to understand the demographic characteristics of households with elders. Elderly households are often interpreted as the presence of at

⁹ After taking into account an overall increase of 28% among families reporting one or more income sources.

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least one elder or headed by an elderly head of household member. Since CAA data used here is based on collection of age data or date of birth from individuals served, it can be safely assumed that at least 19% of all individuals served fell within the 55+ age group. This age group grew by only one percentage point during the last two fiscal years.

As far as housing status of CAA client families is concerned, the proportion between homeowner and renter families remained largely unchanged at 1:3. In other words, for each homeowner family there were three renter families that received services from CAAs. During the last three years, homeowners and renters comprised approximately 26% and 62% of client families served respectively. The homeownership rate among CAA client population is only 26% compared to a statewide average of 64.3%¹⁰, one of the lowest among New England states¹¹. According to the 2000 Census, the homeownership rate for Massachusetts was 61.7%.

When comparing the family housing status of CAA clients with all Massachusetts families, a striking but obvious dissimilarity was observed.

In terms of homeless families, the Cape and the Islands region reported the highest percentage of families who considered themselves homeless at the time of receiving services. Approximately 5,000 or 2.5% of families reported "homeless" as their housing status during fiscal year 2005. At least 171 families received disaster assistance; many were the victims of Hurricane Katrina and were temporarily moved to Massachusetts and housed at Camp Edwards on Otis Air Force Base. A total of 334 individual Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees were served by CAAs in Massachusetts during fiscal year 2005.

DHCD analysis identified the following additional client demographic characteristics:

- ▶ Only 8.49% of adults (24 years or older) receiving services from CAAs had a 2 or 4 year college degree. The vast majority of adults who are receiving services are high school graduates or have a GED and some post secondary education. In 2004, 7.29% of adults reported having a 2 or 4 year college degree.
- ▶ Twenty percent (20%) of CAA individual clients reported that they had no health insurance coverage, compared to a statewide average of 11.7%¹².

¹⁰ CFED, Expanding Economic Opportunity, Customized Data, Washington, D.C.

¹¹ CT - 73%; ME - 73.7%, NH - 74.4%, RI - 59.9% (Source: CFED).

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, "Health Insurance Coverage Status and Type of Coverage by State. All People: 1987 to 2004".

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- ▶ Almost 1/3 of families receiving services are single parent female head of households, followed by single persons who comprised 32% of all households.
- ▶ Almost 23% of the individuals served were of Hispanic or Latino origin, 14% were African American, and 3% were from multi-racial origins.
- ▶ Twenty-eight percent (28%) of families reported wage as the only income source.

CAA RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Each year, CAAs in Massachusetts receive millions of dollars in federal, state, local public, and private resources. CSBG is only a small portion of the funds received by CAAs. Yet, CSBG is a core funding source for CAAs and allows them to operate many direct service programs in their respective communities. During 2005, CAAs in Massachusetts leveraged a total of \$470.41 million from non-CSBG federal, state, local, public, and private sources. FY 2003 evidenced increases in many major federal programs. Compared to 2004, in 2005 CAAs reported significantly more funding from the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and Women Infants and Children (WIC) program. Since 2004, there has been an increase in non-CSBG federal funding. Fiscal year 2005, experienced approximately \$10.99 million more in non-CSBG funding.

Table 2: Changes in Major CAA Federal Funding

Funding Source/Category	Fiscal Year 2005	Fiscal Year 2004
U.S. HHS (all programs)	\$241.18 million	\$220.68 million
U. S. Dept. of Agriculture - Women Infants and Children	\$10.49 million	\$9.94 million
U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development - Section 8	\$20.34 million	\$23.94 million

As in previous years, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services remained the largest federal funding source, followed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Energy, and Department of Agriculture. The top five HHS funding sources were: Fuel Assistance, Head Start, Child Care Development Block Grant, CSBG, and TANF. During fiscal year 2005, more than 80% of all federal funding came from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. LIHEAP and Head Start account for a major portion of Massachusetts CAAs' funding from the federal government. During fiscal year 2005, CAAs reported a total of \$76.69 million in LIHEAP (including LIHEAP Weatherization) and \$73.95 million in Head Start and

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Early Head Start funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Further analysis showed that in 2005 this was almost 51% of all non-CSBG federal funds reported by the CAAs. Besides providing early childhood education and preparing children for elementary school, Head Start in Massachusetts, like other states, often helps families meet their many other immediate challenges. An example of this would be helping families become stabilized in a post emergency situation. Based on FY 2005 enrollment data¹³, a total of 12,846 children received Head Start services in Massachusetts. DHCD estimated that more than 8,700 children experienced healthy growth and development and their families were strengthened through participation in the Head Start program.

In addition to federal resources, CAAs received a total of \$115.53 million in state resources. The top five state funded programs were:

1. State day care and early childhood programs
2. State housing and homeless program
3. State health programs
4. State energy programs
5. State Head Start program

During fiscal year 2005, CAAs reported \$4.43 million in local public sector resources, a \$489,000 decrease from the previous year. At the same time funding from the private sector increased from \$50.91 million in 2004 to \$58.00 million in 2005. Funds from foundations, corporations, and other non-profits registered almost \$6.05 million of the total \$7 million increase. These changes have also affected the ratio between CSBG and non-CSBG dollars, an important CAA resource development indicator. On average, for each CSBG dollar spent, CAAs leveraged \$33 other dollars, a 6.49% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Volunteerism is one of the major features of any non-profit operation. DHCD's analysis showed a steady growth¹⁴ in volunteer activities during the period of fiscal year 2000 through 2004. During fiscal year 2004 CAAs reported a total of 1.08 million hours. However in 2005, DHCD noticed an almost 17% decrease in donated volunteer hours. DHCD's follow-up process revealed at least two or three major reasons for such a drop. Several CAAs reported less volunteer hours from their Head Start program. One agency planner explained that more and more Head Start parents are now working therefore they have less time to volunteer. Uniform tracking of volunteer hours, funding loss, etc., can be attributed to the remaining loss of volunteer hours. Yet, the volunteer hours reported by CAAs in Massachusetts remained very high. Massachusetts contributed to approximately 2% of the total volunteer hours reported nationwide in 2004.

¹³ Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children.

¹⁴ An average growth rate of 13% for the last four years. Future growth cannot be projected from this analysis.

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Overall, resource development from non-federal sources remained strong among Massachusetts CAAs. For each CSBG dollar invested, the CAA network in Massachusetts leveraged \$12.56 from non-federal sources. Even though this ratio has dropped by a dollar in 2005, it has still remained significantly high compared to nationwide average. For each CSBG dollar invested, CAAs leveraged \$20.71 from other non-CSBG federal, \$8.15 from the state, \$0.32 from local public, and \$4.10 from private sources. In other words, for each CSBG dollar, CAAs raised \$4 from non-governmental sources. Close to one half (43%) of the private investments came from foundations, corporations, and other private non-profit organizations. CAAs remained highly reliant on government funding, but the private sector contribution was also significant – during the past three fiscal years, CAAs leveraged on average approximately \$35 million each year from the private sector. FY 2005 witnessed the highest amount of private sector funds compared to funding received in the four most recent years. Overall, there has been a steady increase in private sector CAA resources in Massachusetts.

Table 3: Fiscal Year 2004 – 2005 – Selected Private Sector Resources

Private Sector Funding Sources	Fiscal Year 2004	Fiscal Year 2005 ¹⁵
Foundations, Corporations, United Ways and Other Non-Profit	\$21.95 million	\$28.00 million
Other Donated Funds	\$2.75 million	\$2.17 million
Fees Paid by Clients	\$13.77 million	\$14.43 million
In-Kind services from businesses	\$4.07 million	\$3.55 million

EVIDENCE OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES MOVING TOWARDS SELF-SUFFICIENCY

DHCD has been collecting and reporting on program outcomes since 1997. This would not have been possible without CAAs taking significant strides in making outcome measurement work in Massachusetts. During fiscal years 2004 and 2005, CAAs in Massachusetts reported on the six National Goals and the 12 new National Indicators. Also, numerous local level outcomes developed by CAAs, which are known as “Agency Projected Outcomes”, are not being reported herein. For the most part, CAA reported outcomes were generated from all programs and activities, regardless of funding sources. In other words, the National Indicators as well as the Agency Projected Outcomes more or less capture the depth and breadth of the Community Action programs in Massachusetts. This statewide report summarizes these National Indicators and shows the impact of CAA client services in the following major areas:

¹⁵ There were 25 CAAs in Fiscal Year 2004, one of which did not report this information in Fiscal Year 2004.

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-  *Employment and Employment Support*
-  *Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization*
-  *Community Improvement and Revitalization*
-  *Community Quality of Life and Assets*
-  *Civic Investment*
-  *Community Empowerment*
-  *Community Partnerships*
-  *Resource Development*
-  *Independent Living*
-  *Emergency Assistance*
-  *Child and Family Development*

This is only a snapshot in time as far client outcomes are concerned. Numbers reported herein are what is known as “number achieved outcome”. However, besides what is being reported here, there are many additional numbers of households and individual clients who are still progressing toward their desired outcome. DHCD views this as a process towards clients achieving self-sufficiency not as an end result of CAA service delivery.

Information presented herein is grouped according to the six National Goals and the 12 new National Indicators. The overall quality of CAA data presented demonstrates the CAAs’ ability in making a successful transition to these new 12 National Indicators. Regardless of funding sources, CAAs in Massachusetts have adopted and reported on these National Indicators during fiscal year 2005.

RESULTS ATTAINED

Employment and Employment Support

-  3,236 individuals that were unemployed obtained jobs.
-  1,498 individuals obtained pre-employment skills/competencies required for employment and received training program certification or diploma.
-  Additional 342 clients completed Adult Basic Education (ABE) or General Equivalent Diploma (GED) classes.
-  1,528 individuals enrolled their children in before and after schools programs, in order to gain or maintain employment.
-  Additional 19,507 obtained care for child or other dependent in order to gain or maintain employment.
-  5,841 individuals obtained health care services for themselves or a family member in support of family stability needed to gain or maintain employment.

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- ✚ 5,201 individuals obtained safe and affordable housing in support of family stability needed to gain or retain employment.
- ✚ 15,456 individuals obtained food assistance in support of family stability needed to gain or retain employment.

Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization

- ✚ 4,529 participants in tax preparation programs identified federal or State tax credits and saved over \$6.79 million dollars in combined savings.
- ✚ 107,974 participants were enrolled in telephone lifeline and/or energy discounts programs and saved over \$26.53 million.
- ✚ 36 households saved a combined total of \$201,723 and purchased a home.
- ✚ 277 households opened an IDA account and reported a combined savings of \$299,069.

Community Improvement and Revitalization

- ✚ 17,084 safe and affordable housing units in the community were preserved or improved through construction, weatherization or rehabilitation.
- ✚ Community education and training placement opportunities were created for 6,968 people.
- ✚ Accessible and affordable health care services/facilities were created in community for 17,244 people.

Community Participation

- ✚ Volunteers donated a total of 904,066 hours to community action.
- ✚ 1,676 low-income people participated in formal community organizations, government boards or councils and participated in decision making and policy settings.
- ✚ An additional 14,027 people remained engaged in non-governance community activities.
- ✚ CAAs formed 2,686 partnerships with community-based organizations – 130 of those partnerships were with faith-based organizations.

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Emergency Services

- ✚ 17,304 senior citizens and 6,650 individuals with disabilities maintained independent living due to CAA services.
- ✚ 131,302 households received emergency vendor payments including fuel and energy bills and rent/mortgage payments.
- ✚ CAAs provided emergency medical care to 5,700 households, temporary shelter to 2,353 households, and disaster assistance (including services to Hurricane Katrina victims) to 171 households.

Child, Youth and Family Development

- ✚ 34,026 infants and children obtained age appropriate immunizations, medical, and dental care.
- ✚ 8,739 children participated in pre-school activities to develop school readiness skills. A majority of these children were involved in the Head Start program.
- ✚ 5,736 infants and children participated in pre-school activities and were developmentally ready to enter Kindergarten or 1st grade.
- ✚ 6,217 parents and other adults learned and exhibited improved family functioning skills.

EVIDENCE OF CLIENTS ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD – Boston)

South End Neighborhood Service Center (SNAP) Operation Re-Entry Ex-Offenders Program

The reentry program services newly released inmates from The Suffolk County House of Correction. Upon release these individuals do not have the resources necessary to fully matriculate into society.

Approximately 600 people are released from jail each year. They return, in large part, to poor and working class urban neighborhoods that are under considerable social and economic strain. The ex-offender population had disproportionately high rates of addiction, mental illness, and other serious health problems, not to mention limited education and work experience. Ex-offenders must deal with statutory and

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regulatory restrictions that affect their ability to get and keep employment, find stable housing, maintain their health, and reintegrate into their families and communities.

The prison system does prepare these individuals for their transition or for community reintegration. There is very little support or assistance for them after they have been released. With these hurdles, the majority of the ex-offender population is failing to succeed outside of the walls. The most salient indicator of that failure is the recidivism rate: nationally, two out of three of all individuals released from prison are rearrested within three years, and 50% of all these arrests occur within the first six months post-release.

This failure rate is alarming and bears heavily on the families and communities these individuals come from. Public safety cannot be ensured without addressing the needs of people after they are released from prison and the barriers that hinder them from becoming self-sufficient individuals.

The South End Neighborhood Service Center (SNAP) took on the challenge faced by this population by developing the Operation Reentry program, which provides support, case management, information/referral and a "care bag" to assist them with some of the basic needs that are often forgotten. SNAP has courageously taken on an issue that affects ABCD's service population across the board in some way or another. During FY 2005, 250 ex-offenders were provided with services through the Operation Re-Entry program. With future support, the SNAP program will be able to link services with other ABCD programs and sites to provide comprehensive services to assist this population in their endeavor to thrive in mainstream society and obtain self-sufficiency.

CSBG funding leveraged additional funding from Boston Connects to provide for a program coordinator to staff this program. CSBG also provides supervision and administrative support to this initiative.

Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc. (CAPIC - Chelsea)

Housing Assistance Program

An elderly married couple from Revere, both with High School degrees, found themselves homeless and sleeping on a park bench. They had fixed Social Security income, had worked previously and could not afford the high cost of their apartment. The weather forced them to find shelter at the Pine Street Inn. They were then referred to CAPIC for housing services. She was 65 and he was 68.

In the wake of an ever increasing housing and economic crisis in Massachusetts, there had been a substantial increase in the number of referrals of homeless individuals and families for housing services. All families were on fixed income, which in most cases was not enough to cover expenses associated with basic needs. Through CAPIC's

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Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) contract for the Housing Assistance Program, CAPIC could only assist families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. However, many of the referrals were for homeless elders. Instead of turning them away, CAPIC actively searched for additional resources to help serve this economically disadvantaged population overcome the barriers that were keeping them in poverty and homeless. CAPIC incorporated this function into its existing Self-Sufficiency Program by extending the case manager's hours to address this growing need.

The program was designed to provide housing search and placement services for elders who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Once placed into safe, affordable housing, transitional support services are provided under a scattered site model for up to 12 months until long-term permanent elder housing can be secured.

The Project manager works closely with the Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop Home Care as well as other partners to coordinate services after placing elders into permanent housing.

These core services were offered to the elderly couple living at the Pine Street Inn to move them out of a condition of poverty and homelessness. Medical treatment, mental health counseling, clothing, and food vouchers were also provided to improve the quality of life for the elderly couple. Once placed into elder housing, the couple received donations for household appliances, linens and furniture. They visit the office regularly and are healthy and happy. They continue to thank and remember CAPIC for all that was done to get them into a long term, safe housing situation.

CAPIC received CSBG Special Project funds to provide extensive case management and housing services for elders, providing intense stabilization services to ensure long term stability and eventual placement in elder housing.

Without CSBG funds CAPIC would have had to say no to countless elders looking for housing assistance. In FY 2004, CAPIC was able to permanently place over 20 elders into secure, safe, affordable housing.











CAPIC/HarborCOV

The CAPIC/HarborCOV Boston Foundation Initiative addresses the connection between homelessness and domestic violence, an often unseen and undisclosed primary cause of family homelessness.

CAPIC and HarborCOV provided prevention services to families at-risk of becoming homeless. The program model includes: referral, assessment, stabilization assistance, supportive services, data collection, and evaluation. Both agencies already had case management (including all components) in place and had much success in achieving outcomes in housing placements and domestic violence counseling.

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Data obtained from the 2000 U.S. Census indicated the characteristics that generally define the at-risk population greatly in need of supportive services. Conditions that place families at risk are:

-  Incidence of Domestic Violence
-  Single Parent, Female Head of Household
-  Single Parent Female Head of Household with Children under 14.
-  Incidence of Poverty and Unemployment
-  Substance Use
-  Overcrowding
-  Sub-Standard Housing
-  High Rents
-  Language Barrier and Illiteracy
-  Lack of Affordable Day Care

By using zip codes, CAPIC was able to identify data on population characteristics¹⁶. In consideration of this variable, the total estimated population of the four-community area is 139,079 persons, of which 61% is comprised of families. Of that total, 15.45% are female heads of household. Revere had the highest number of female heads of household at 4,067. In the four communities, there are 36,898 Hispanic clients (approximately 25% of the entire population). Chelsea's Hispanic population dominates the combined total, at 16,984. There are 55,663 housing units, of which 35% are rental units. According to the U.S. Census 2000, there are 20,550 persons living below the poverty level in Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop. This number represents 20.4% of the total population of this area. However, it should be noted that this data reflects poverty status data from 1999. Per capita, this sub-region has the highest rate of poverty and at-risk families, with the greatest shortage of affordable housing. This area also maintains some of the oldest, lead-based housing stock resulting in a high rate of sub-standard, deteriorating units.

CAPIC was instrumental in the development of this project. CAPIC approached HarborCOV, a domestic violence agency, to collaborate on this important initiative and to coordinate resources around domestic violence and homelessness. Once both parties were committed to the project, CAPIC began delineating roles and began the planning process around starting up this new initiative. A new grant was awarded by the Boston Foundation. Once awarded, CAPIC became the fiscal conduit for the funds to be used to address homeless issues being faced by victims of violence. CAPIC also maintained client data in an effort to analyze and evaluate client information to better service this extremely vulnerable population.

¹⁶ The statistics are inclusive of Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop, and East Boston.

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A referral system was established between the two community agencies to work together to address the housing, economic and individual service needs of domestic violence survivors.

As partners, CAPIC and HarborCOV have assisted close to 50 families in local communities, avoiding shelter/hotel placement. Extensive supportive services and stabilization assistance were used to achieve this outcome. Stabilization assistance included payment of rental arrears and short-term rental payment. Assistance to each family was determined case by case. Landlords are asked to sign agreements acknowledging the funds are to be used for a three month period and would work with the family to ensure continuance of the apartment. When necessary to prevent homelessness, funds were used for security deposit or first and last months rent.

Families were referred to the program through their local area DTA Office located within DTA HAP Region 2. CAPIC'S Region 2 is currently comprised of four local DTA offices in Revere, Malden, Davis Square in Somerville, and Boston Family Housing. Families were assessed by the CAPIC HAP program which conducted the preliminary screenings. Appropriate referrals were made to HarborCOV once each client had been assessed.

After the initial screening process was completed the HAP Program and HarbroCOV submitted requests to CAPIC to make the final eligibility determination. This included verifying that it was a viable referral and request. CAPIC and HarborCOV verified all documentation provided, mediated with landlords to ensure stability for the family, and avoid any future eviction proceedings prior to distribution of any financial assistance.

Determination of priority of services was established after an extensive evaluation, with the implementation of a Housing Plan relative to each case disposition setting timelines and specific goals. The Housing Plan sets the direction for the case manager, depicting progress and level of housing search efforts. Each case was maintained in a hard file as well as within the integrated and computerized client tracking network.

Standardized core services included:

- ◇ Landlord/tenant mediation and counseling services, meeting with landlords to negotiate an agreement equitable to all parties, to include payback of rent arrears from local resources, services to defray monthly cost of rent, and referrals to other programs able to help both tenant and landlord (e.g., Weatherization Assistance Program).
- ◇ Budgeting, housekeeping and tenancy related services to promote stability of long-term tenancy with referrals to Self-Sufficiency Program when appropriate.

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- ◇ Community linkages with local resources to support stability of housing such as Legal Services, United Way, Salvation Army, substance abuse prevention programs, transitional housing programs, Fuel Assistance, Weatherization, Child Care, Head Start, Employment and Training programs, mental health services, Churches, youth development programs, Food Pantries, and furniture assistance programs.
- ◇ Transportation provided for clients to view apartments, attend court dates, eligibility determination appointments, and other tenancy related issues.
- ◇ Advocacy in housing court appearances, reviewing tenants' rights and responsibilities, fair housing rules.
- ◇ Ongoing case management services to coordinate prevention, housing search and stabilization efforts to ensure that the tenant is able to maintain housing.

When mediation and prevention do not resolve the existing housing situation, it becomes necessary to implement relocation efforts for safe, affordable, permanent housing. In addition to services already listed, housing search efforts will include:

- ◇ Training to empower clients to present themselves to landlords, make appropriate telephone calls, process paperwork for housing applications and conduct housing search locally and statewide.
- ◇ Screening of family eligibility for subsidized public and private housing applications.
- ◇ Assisting families in resolving CORI, credit, and legal problems through case management meetings and provider sponsored workshops.

These services included weekly meetings between clients' and case managers, home visits, contact with local landlords and building managers and acting as community liaison, attending community meetings and workshops to better understand housing issues facing communities being served. Client Responsibility Forms must be signed and must clearly explain the client's role in their search housing.

As a result of the network between CAPIC and HarborCOV, caseworkers were able to offer additional services to families struggling with barriers keeping them from being self-sufficient, housing being one of many obstacles preventing families from achieving self-reliance.

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In addition, the coordination of newly available financial resources available to victims of violence helped maintain or obtain housing, keeping the family safe.

Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI - Lowell)

Shelter to Housing

Kimberly, from Lowell, Massachusetts, is a homeless mother with three children, ages one, seven, and twelve. When she became homeless, she was placed in a hotel where she lived with her three children in a typical hotel room with two full-sized beds, a crib for the baby, a small table and no kitchen. Kimberly lived in that one room for seven months until she moved to a permanent apartment with the help of the Shelter to Housing Program initiated by Community Teamwork, Inc.

The Shelter to Housing Program provides a \$6,000 stipend to help homeless families with the first year of rent. Case workers from CTI's Housing Assistance Program successfully moved 44 families from state funded hotels within the Merrimack Valley into permanent homes, all within an eight week period.

The Shelter to Housing Program was developed by the SHIFT (Stabilized Housing for Individuals and Families in Transition) Coalition and led by CTI. It began when a small group of area providers began to collaborate on ways to address vital issues facing homeless families from Greater Lowell. Out of that small group emerged the SHIFT Coalition, partners who are committed to ending homelessness. Today the coalition consists of approximately 30 members from several different organizations including CTI, the City of Lowell, Lowell Housing Authority, Department of Social Services, Department of Transitional Assistance, Greater Lowell Interfaith Leadership Alliance, and Central Food Ministry. CTI serves as the lead agency and fiscal conduit for SHIFT.

The purpose of SHIFT is two-fold: to assist in efforts to move families out of state-funded motels into permanent housing, and to develop an early warning and intervention system to identify at-risk families and prevent homelessness.

Together, the Shelter to Housing Program and the SHIFT Coalition assisted families in finding permanent housing, provided home furnishings for families who had nothing, and helped families with rent, utility arrearages, car insurance and other bills to help get them settled and stabilized.

Once a family becomes stable, it is matched with a volunteer from the Jericho Road Project, a group of professionals from the First Parish Church in Concord, Massachusetts who share their talents and resources with community based organizations that can help individuals and families become economically self-sustaining. The mission of this partnership is to aid the families in working toward

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financial independence and self-sustainability with the ultimate goal of being able to pay their full rent in the 13th month of the program.

These programs and partnerships can help families like Kimberly's. As one of the families to receive the Shelter to Housing funds, Kimberly and her children moved into a permanent home in Lowell. She has a new job selling classified advertising for a local newspaper and is confident that she can make it next year without help from the subsidy.

CTI's Executive Director as well as the Director of Planning and Program Development, and the Assistant Director of Planning and Program Development, are all active members of the SHIFT Coalition. Their salaries are paid with CSBG funds. Were it not for CSBG funds, the Executive Director's leadership of the SHIFT Coalition and the Shelter to Housing Program and planning department's development of its ideas into a fundable program would not have been possible. CTI recently received private dollars to fund a full-time SHIFT Coalition Coordinator who will coordinate the efforts of the Coalition.

Franklin Community Action Corporation (FCAC - Greenfield)

Healthy Connections

FCAC's Healthy Connections health care access program operates throughout the North Quabbin region, which is comprised of five towns in Worcester County and four towns in Franklin County. CSBG funds are used to support work with Franklin County residents only, about 43% of the region's residents. About 16% of the people Healthy Connections serves are seniors, age 60 and over, roughly proportionate to their presence in the population as a whole. Of the approximately 1,500 seniors 65 years and older, about 14% or 210 have income below the Federal Poverty Level (U.S. Census 2000).

The insurance and free care systems that underlie access to health care for low-income and disabled Massachusetts residents are complex, and many publicly-insured, uninsured, and underinsured people have great difficulty navigating this system successfully. At a time of life when their abilities to cope with change and complexity are declining and their need for medical intervention is increasing, older consumers often find themselves terribly confused by this complicated and constantly shifting environment. Rural consumers in areas like the North Quabbin region bear the added burden of insufficient local capacity in both primary and specialty care and of having to travel long distances to obtain adequate care.

Healthy Connections staff provides eligibility screening for a broad range of both publicly- and privately-funded medical care; helps consumers complete applications; conducts individualized follow-up to assure that clients are keeping appointments and understanding doctors' instructions; collaborates with local health care and social

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service providers to remove barriers to care such as transportation or lack of knowledge about self-care; and participates in forums that bring frontline issues to the attention of state policymakers.

All Healthy Connections staff work with seniors. In fiscal year 2004, one staff was trained as a SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) counselor by the Franklin County Home Care Corporation (FCHCC) to provide free information, counseling, and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries and elders with questions about insurance and prescriptions. FCHCC also gave Healthy Connections a small grant to provide vouchers for medications, vitamins, eyeglasses, diabetes supplies, support hose, etc., for seniors who have low-incomes. Healthy Connections also collaborated closely with Home Care caseworkers on behalf of individual seniors, as well as with the North Quabbin Town Nurse, an employee of the Franklin County Community Health Center, leaving her free to do health education and nursing. Athol Memorial Hospital and local Councils on Aging are other major referral sources to Healthy Connections.

When seniors know they have someone to turn to who can explain and help with gaining appropriate medical care, they are more likely to maintain a higher quality of life as they age. Every time a consumer maintains health or treats an illness as quickly as possible, the care and coverage systems save resources. When consumers stay connected with care, they avoid the "churn" of gaining and losing coverage that endangers their health. Healthy Connections helps to create these outcomes in the North Quabbin region.

Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC - Fitchburg)

Common Cents IDA

Maria, a young Latino single mother of three boys ages ten, three, and six months entered into the MOC Common Cents Program with the dream of owning her own home with her own backyard for her children to play safely in. Maria had availed herself of MOC's services starting 10 years ago when she was a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipient. Through MOC's programs, Maria was able to complete her GED and graduate from the MOC Office Assistant Program. Six years ago she began working at a local health clinic as a medical office assistant. Last year Maria earned \$20,509.

Maria enrolled in the MOC Common Cents Individual Development Account (IDA) Program with a few obstacles on her road to economic independence including a very poor credit record that needed to be repaired. The road to home ownership was not an easy one given the current high prices in the housing market and the poor quality of homes available in her price range. Three different times Maria thought she had found her dream home only to have the dream crushed after the home inspections. Finally, Maria found "the home" yet there were many more hurdles to overcome. The

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house was a single family home with a price tag of \$94,000 and many repairs needed. Through MOC's assistance and Maria's perseverance Maria was able to access \$47,000 through the city of Fitchburg's CDBG Program to provide new siding, windows, wiring, and a kitchen. The "Get the Lead Out" Program provided \$18,000 for lead abatement and she was able to access \$2,000 toward closing costs through the First Time Homebuyer Program. Maria was also able to access a reduced rate (2%) mortgage through the Leominster Credit Union. Maria saved \$1,333 in her account with the IDA match giving her a total of \$5,333 toward her down payment. Maria has finally moved into her home where her mortgage, taxes, and water total \$600 per month. Her rent was \$650 per month. Maria is very happy and grateful.

CSBG plays a pivotal role in providing partial funding for the Common Cents Individual Development Account (IDA) Program. MOC serves as lead agency for a consortium of four CAAs that includes: Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC), South Shore Community Action Council (SSCAC), and Franklin County Community Action Council (FCAC). The IDA program serves as an opportunity for low-income households to build assets to help permanently elevate them to economic self-sufficiency. The program teaches the value of asset building, financial literacy, encourages individual initiative and long range planning, instills lifetime saving habits, and introduces low-income families to financial institutions and products available to them. Client savings which are matched can then be used to invest in certain assets including homeownership, small business capitalization, or post secondary education. Clients save a maximum of \$1,333 which is then matched by the agency \$3 to \$1 bringing the maximum total available to the client of \$5,333. Each of the participating agencies raises funds for the match. The program requires intense work by the agency staff to assist clients in financial literacy, accessing additional resources to supplement their IDA account, providing assistance to find an appropriate home, identifying products available, approaching financial institutions, identifying appropriate educational institutions, and accessing the technical assistance necessary for starting a business.

The Common Cents IDA Program is partially funded through CSBG funds. The consortium of four CAAs involved also receives funding through the Office of Community Services Assets for Independence Program to open 90 IDAs. Each agency also raises funds individually to provide some of the match monies. The program serves as a means to educate clients in financial literacy and also helps the client begin financial asset building. The CSBG funding helps provide the staffing necessary to operate the program and provide the training and technical assistance necessary for clients to be successful. Asset building is a permanent solution to alleviating poverty over the long term.

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North Shore Community Action Programs, Inc. (NSCAP - Peabody)

River House

For the past five years concerned community members in Beverly have recognized the growing need for an emergency shelter within their city. A makeshift winter shelter was pulled together each year with funding from various places including the City of Beverly. The location changed from year to year and fiscal oversight was managed by different agencies in Beverly. As a result of budget cuts, Beverly found it necessary to withdraw its funding, which meant closing the shelter in April 2003.

A group of 10 or 12 core Beverly community leaders, including NSCAP's Executive Director, have worked together since that time to find a way to provide a permanent year round shelter for homeless and chronically homeless individuals.

In the winter of 2003, NSCAP met with community activists and local leaders to plan for a long-term, more wide-reaching solution to the need for emergency and transitional shelter for homeless individuals. After several meetings, considerable research, and discussion with other professionals in the field, NSCAP proposed to the group that they collectively purchase a building and renovate it so that part of it might provide year-round emergency shelter, while another part could be used for single residency occupancies within a "safe haven" model. This seemed to make good sense given the chronic homelessness that was experienced by most of the shelter guests and also given the mental health issues that several homeless individuals evidenced. The plan was (and is) to create a continuum of services for homeless people that can help them access support and move permanently from homelessness to stable and sustainable living situations such as the Safe Haven.

The Beverly group decided to form a 501 (c) 3 organizations (now called River House, Inc.) with NSCAP as a founding board member. NSCAP also agreed to act as lead agency and take on the initial grant-writing responsibilities for garnering purchase and renovation funds. Other board members worked to generate community donations, positive publicity and dozens of other tasks that could not have been accomplished without many busy hands.

In Fiscal Year 2004, NSCAP was instrumental in the oversight of the closing, which resulted in the purchase of 56 River Street by River House, Inc. Because of NSCAP's grant writing and administrative oversight, the organization was able to purchase the house for \$328,000. In addition, the agency provided the management function of the emergency shelter for the 2004 - 2005 seasons.

The River House, Inc., group is comprised of members from *We Care About Homes* (a small housing development non-profit in Beverly), Beverly Bootstraps (a small,

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church-based advocacy group), First Baptist Church (also has a seat on the NSCAP Board), local business people, and low-income community activists.

Between FY 2003 and 2005 NSCAP raised nearly \$900,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Federal Home Bank, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)/CEDAC Housing Innovation Funds and other sources including private fundraising. These funds have already been utilized for the purchase of a well-located appropriately sized property in Beverly and the recently awarded Housing Innovation Funds will be used for building renovation that will result in the creation of five SRO (Single Room Occupancy) units specifically designated for chronically homeless individuals. These independent living units became part of the River House facilities by the end of Fiscal Year 2005.

Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc. (QCAP - Quincy)

Learning Link Technological Center

QCAP opened its newest program, Learning Links Technology Center, in March 2004 using seed money from CSBG, donated computers, and much hard work and ingenuity on the part of staff. When a retail establishment on the street-level of the building housing QCAP's administrative offices went out of business, QCAP decided the space would be perfect for a community technology center. However, what seemed to be a simple job of cleaning up the site and making slight alterations to the layout turned into a much more challenging process. The facility needed more alterations than originally anticipated in order to make the site handicapped accessible. In addition, the plans had to be approved by the City of Quincy's Building Inspectional Services, and all signage by the City's Historical Commission. While QCAP worked to pull together the facility itself. Management also had to ensure that the donated computer equipment was rebuilt for use in the site, hire a coordinator, plan for programming, secure donated software and other in-kind donations, and begin steps to find long-term financial support for the center.

Since its opening, the center has provided open access to computers and high-speed Internet connections for over 500 low-income youth, adults, seniors, disabled, and homeless individuals. During scheduled open access times, members may use the center's computers for job related, civic, educational and social purposes that fall within the center's guidelines. Unlike other technology access centers in the Quincy area, the center has on-site staff and volunteers to help members with little or no technology skills learn about computers in a comfortable, supportive environment. In addition to open access times, Learning Links offers scheduled training classes, including a very popular Introduction to the Computer class, and special activities and services for specific client groups. These include a *Wired Homebuying* workshop that teaches participants in our First Time Homebuyer Education program how to use the Internet to aid in their housing search, *Cyber Tots* a technology based playgroup

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for young children and their caregivers, on-line food stamp application assistance, and most recently tax help for low-income taxpayers. All services, including classes, are provided free of charge.

QCAP's Learning Links Technology Center offers low-income people who do not have access to a computer and/or the Internet a chance to build essential technology skills so they may find good jobs, secure needed resources, succeed in school, maximize their assets, and ultimately attain self-sufficiency.

The center is staffed by one full-time coordinator and relies on volunteer support to operate. Volunteers assist the coordinator with a range of tasks including: administrative help, technical support for members, and classroom assistance.

Steve is a 44 year old, homeless man who resides at a local shelter in Quincy. His sole source of income is SSDI. Steve has a Bachelor's degree, but is unable to work due to health issues.

Steve became a Learning Links member shortly after the center opened in March 2004. He was referred by QCAP's Homeless Education instructor, as he had been enrolled in the Department of Education funded ABE class for homeless adults. Steve was also a scholarship recipient and successfully completed computer courses at Quincy College. Steve soon became a regular at Learning Links, using computers during open access times. He also referred many people to the center. Since he was at the center daily, Steve developed a relationship with the center coordinator, who recognized his computer skills, and his willingness to help others. She recruited him to become a QCAP volunteer. Steve now provides volunteer assistance at Learning Links five days per week. His duties include serving as a training assistant, providing technical help to Learning Links members during open access times, and staffing the reception desk and answering phones when needed. Steve is personable, reliable, and dedicated to Learning Links. He has become an essential member of the Learning Links team, and has developed a strong sense of belonging and ownership for the center.

Steve is one of five homeless men who currently volunteer their time and talent at Learning Links. They take pride in the center and are essential to keeping the center running. In turn they are developing essential employment skills and a valuable reference that will help them make the transition when they are ready to full-time and employment and eventually self-sufficiency.

Learning Links' build-out and start-up were largely funded by QCAP's CSBG carry-over funds. CSBG carryover funds are currently used to cover a portion of center operating costs including staff salary and fringe benefits, rent, utilities, and computer maintenance. QCAP staff members have begun a fundraising effort to secure funding for Learning Links from foundations and other private sources to sustain the center over the long-term.

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Worcester Community Action Council, Inc. (WCAC - Worcester)

Individual Development Account (IDA)

Marie-Rose began the IDA program in April 2003. After she completed the eight weeks of Economic Literacy Classes, Marie-Rose made the first deposit into her IDA account in May 2003. Marie-Rose had saved \$1,333 by September 2003. Her match of \$4000 provided her with a down payment of \$5,333 towards buying a home.

Marie-Rose is a single mother, 38-years of age and hails from Africa. She has some college education. She is the mother of three young children. In order to save money, it was necessary for her to work one full-time and one part-time job. She was very determined to buy a home in 2004. She met with the staff of the Homeownership Center of Worcester and put her name in a lottery. She was notified in August 2004 that she won. She would be buying a three family home through Worcester Common Ground, a CDC located in Worcester. Worcester Common Ground rehabilitated the property into three brand new apartments. Marie-Rose moved into her new home in October 2004. Worcester Common Ground assisted Marie-Rose with finding tenants for the second and third floor apartments. Due to the rental income, Marie-Rose's monthly mortgage payment is very affordable.

CommonCents is an IDA Program operated by a Consortium of four Massachusetts Community Action Agencies: The Worcester Community Action Council, Inc. (WCAC) Franklin Community Action Corporation (FCAC), South Shore Community Action Council, Inc. (SSCAC) and the Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC), the lead agency. CommonCents is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services, under the Assets for Independence IDA Demonstration Program. Participants must attend eight Economic Literacy Classes where they receive training on budgeting, personal banking, credit reports and fraud and financial planning. A case manager works with the individuals and families on the savings requirements and assists with questions and program related problems. After completing the Economic Literacy classes, the families must be willing to save money and participate in a savings club that meets monthly for additional knowledge and support.

Last year 12 families participated in WCAC's IDA program. Three of the twelve families purchased a home. Six (50%) of the twelve regularly attended savings group meetings and saved an average of \$50.00 a month. Another four families are in the process of buying a home.

Some CSBG funding made it possible for a WCAC staff person to provide case management services to Marie-Rose referring her to the appropriate resources; consequently, she was able to fulfill her dream of buying her first home.

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Through MOC, the lead agency, WCAC received \$7,500 in CSBG Special Projects Funds to help administer WCAC's IDA program.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Community Action, Inc. (CAI - Haverhill)

The Housing Development Program

Community Action, Inc. (CAI) entered into a contract with the City of Haverhill to conduct all housing lotteries for units built under the City's new Affordable Housing Ordinance. The ordinance requires all developers to set aside at least 10% of their units for residents who earn fewer than 80% of area median income.

Community Action conducted the first lottery under this new ordinance in 2005. The unit available was a new, 1,400 square foot condominium with three bedrooms, two and one-half bathrooms, single car garage, fully-applianced-kitchen, central air conditioning, back deck, and tiled foyer kitchen and baths. The unit was part of a new six-unit condo development built on an inner-city lot. The affordable unit was priced at \$156,000. The market rate units sold for \$220,000.

CAI conducted the lottery in accordance with guidelines developed by CAI in concert with the City of Haverhill Community Development office. The lottery was marketed regionally targeting first-time homebuyers with incomes under 80% of median. Over 20 households took out applications, 12 were completed and returned in accordance with the guidelines and six households qualified, two of which were ethnic minority families.

Connie is a 29-year-old single mother, who is employed as an administrative assistant in a local dentist office, was selected first at a public drawing held at the CAI main office. Her annual income is \$30,000, less than 60% of area median for her family size. At the time, she was living in a two bedroom apartment paying \$1,100 per months in rent.

Her life was not easy. The birth of her child forced her to forgo her goal of attending college. She ended up on public assistance. But she was determined to have a better life for her and her daughter. She moved back in with her mother, finished school and attended a program at a local community college. Her employer is now helping her finish her degree program. The dream has always been to own her own home, a luxury she never had as a child where she moved from apartment to apartment.

Connie enrolled in CAI's First Time Home Buyer Program. A certificate from this program qualified her for a \$10,000 down payment assistance grant. CAI also secured a reduced interest and down payment mortgage package from a local bank that

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supported CAI's first time homebuyer's program. Her total mortgage, taxes and homeowner insurance payment was less than her current rent.

The gratitude and enthusiasm she demonstrated after she won the lottery was an emotional event for all in attendance. Getting a chance was all she ever asked for. Her work ethic, her determination, assistance from CAI and the community and a little bit of luck helped her realize the American dream. She is now a homeowner.

The CAI Housing Development Director also served as an advocate for Connie with the developer who often tries to take advantage of first time home buyers by not providing all of the materials, appliances and amenities in accordance to the ordinance. CAI will continue to provide post purchase education and counseling on an as needed basis through CAI's First Time Home Buyer program. Connie has also been referred to CAI's Heating Assistance program.

The Housing Development Program at CAI has funding that is pieced together from a variety of public and private sources including financial institutions, a resident organization, affordable housing developers, and CSBG.

CSBG is used to partially fund the Housing Development Director's position. The funding of this position has resulted in the expansion of CAI's housing development effort in recent years to include: establishing first time home buyer programs in both the Greater Newburyport and Greater Haverhill areas; conducting affordable housing lotteries under both state mandated comprehensive permit and local affordable housing ordinances; developing rental assistance program for CAI education and training participants through the Home program; and developing a resident non-profit corporation that was established under the federal Low-income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership Act expiring use program. Without CSBG, putting together all of the pieces together that resulted in the client's successful home purchase would not have been possible.

Tri-City Community Action Programs, Inc. (TRICAP - Malden)

The Gateway Program

PX, one of the participants in the Gateway Program has been chronically homeless and is currently a guest in TRICAP's Stan Kaszanek Transitional House (KH). PX has minimal skills and is minimally employable.

PX signed up for the Gateway Program at the Cyber Café @ Malden Square to improve his computer skills after the Project Coordinator made a presentation at a house meeting. Initially, PX had to have several reminders to come to the Cyber Cafe for his one-on-one tutorials -- but he soon changed his ways, and became a regular.

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In the beginning, PX did not know anything about the computer and was a bit intimidated by it. After a couple of sessions, PX recognized that one of the main skills he lacked was keyboarding. Through the partnership with The Career Place, Mavis Beacon typing tutorial software was available. PX began using this and even asked if he could borrow the software to practice on the computer at KH.

By the time the program ended (six months), PX had acquired 13 of the 21 skills he lacked at the pre-assessment such as: turning the computer on/off; performing basic operations such as opening and closing programs; doing basic word processing; getting on the Internet and navigating the online resource especially developed by the Project Coordinator for participants to do job, housing, public benefit searches, and receiving and sending e-mail.

Computers and the Internet are no longer a mystery to PX and with these skills, he is making serious strides toward increasing his employability and self-sufficiency.

Partially funded by CSBG funds, The Cyber Café, received a Connections for Tomorrow grant to serve ten formerly homeless and/or at-risk adults through the Gateway Program. Guests/residents of the Stan Kaszanek Transitional House, a project also receiving CSBG funds, were the focal point. Small group and one-on-one tutorials were held with the residents at the transitional house and at the Cyber Café. The goal was to improve their computer literacy and Internet skills, so that they could do more effective housing, job, and public benefits searches to transition into a better quality of life.

The Project Coordinator developed an online resource at: (<http://maldensquare.org/resources>), using *blog* software, where searches are categorized, e.g., housing, education, health care, and jobs. Additionally, The Career Place (TCP) partnered to do on-site (at KH) trainings on job search, resume writing, and one-on-one feedback for those who wanted the latter. TCP, also a Cyber Café partner, made some of their training tools (such as the Mavis Beacon typing tutorial software) available to the program.

Other work products of The Gateway Program included: 1) a curriculum to accommodate students entering and exiting at various points (parts were already used by another grantee); and 2) two assessment tools -- one for self-assessment and the other for teacher observation. Based upon these tools, six of the ten participants who followed through consistently and were tracked gained 62%-100% of the 12 to 21 skills they lacked when starting the program. (Forty-three skills are delineated in the assessment tool.)

The final program goal was to identify and work with five program participants who were willing to become mentors. Four individuals volunteered and began to work with their peers.

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TRICAP is enthusiastic that such results occurred in only six to seven months and hope to sustain key aspects of the program, as resources allow.

Cambridge Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. (CEOC - Cambridge)

EITC in Cambridge

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a "refundable" tax credit, which means that if a worker's income tax liability is less than the amount of the credit for which he or she qualifies, the worker receives the remaining amount of the credit as a refund.

The EITC reduces poverty. U.S. Census data for 2003 shows that EITC lifted 4.4 million people out of poverty, including 2.4 million children. Without EITC, the poverty rate among children would have been nearly 1/4 higher. It further shows that EITC raised more children out of poverty than any other single program or category of programs. EITC strongly complements the minimum wage and income inequality. Research shows that many families that receive EITC use it to pay for basic necessities like housing, food, utilities, and basic household appliances. Others use their EITC to make purchases or investments that can help them to maintain their jobs and their homes or to improve their employability. Research also indicates that a significant share of families use part of their EITC to repair or replace a car needed to get to work, to make essential but costly repairs to a home such as repairing a leaking roof, or to pay for more education or job training.

As a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site for the 2005 tax season, CEOC provided free tax preparation to 273 tax filers returning to them over \$300,000 in refunds, with over \$100,000 in EITC and child tax credits. CEOC further saved these low-wage earners the fees of private tax preparers.

Seventy-five percent of CEOC's free tax preparation service is funded with CSBG funds. CEOC trains staff to provide tax preparation services in addition to their other staff duties. Without CSBG funding, CEOC could not provide this necessary service and many low-wage earners would be forced to pay the high fees of the private tax preparers for simple tax returns reducing the benefit of their EITC and child tax credit and further contributing to existing income inequality gaps. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) has been found to produce substantial increases in employment and reductions in transitional (welfare) benefits among single parents, as well as large decreases in poverty.

Although EITC provides major financial benefits to the working low-income individuals and families, the fact remains that as many as 18-25% of eligible taxpayers do not claim the credit. There are several possible reasons that may explain why workers do not claim the EITC. One is that workers may not know about the EITC, especially those who are new to the workforce, those who have difficulty with

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English, or those who were laid off in the last tax year, who otherwise would have earned incomes above the EITC ceiling. Another possibility is that workers maybe familiar with EITC but do not know how to obtain it.

Through its outreach efforts CEOC is coordinating the Cambridge EITC Coalition. The Coalition will work to ensure that more low-wage workers are aware of and effectively take advantage of this credit, while at the same time avoiding predatory private tax preparers.

Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI - Lowell)

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)

Carmen is a 41 year old woman with an 18 year old son. She rents a modest apartment in Lowell, MA for \$950 per month. She works full-time grossing \$21,984 annually or \$10.56 per hour.

Carmen recently was faced with the unenviable choice of whether she would help out two family members, her father and her grandson, who needed medical assistance where they live in Puerto Rico. Although her own income is very low and her savings are minimal, Carmen made the difficult decision to assist them and sent approximately \$1,500 over a period of time to help pay for necessary operations.

Due to her limited income, she fell behind on her rent and one of her utility bills. Carmen kept her landlord and the utility informed of her situation. She was afraid that she had made a huge mistake by helping her family. Since she is on a waiting list for subsidized housing with Community Teamwork Inc. (CTI), Carmen turned to CTI for help. CTI was able to assist her in preventing her homelessness with assistance from the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program.

Originally a pilot program in FY 2005, RAFT is a state-funded program designed to provide short-term limited financial assistance to enable families to stay in their homes, obtain new housing, or otherwise prevent homelessness. When Carmen turned to CTI for help, she was about one month behind on her rent and over \$300 behind on her electric bill. While the program can pay out as much as \$3,000, RAFT was able to assist with \$1,400 to prevent the eviction and shutoff and allow Carmen to continue to provide for her family in their own home.

Carmen worked with staff at the Housing Consumer Education Program and is committed to following her budget and work plan as she moves forward.

In FY06, 280 households like Carmen in the Merrimack Valley and northeast Massachusetts were assisted with RAFT funds that prevented homelessness and kept families stabilized in their own homes.

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The RAFT program itself is funded through the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. The staff who were instrumental in obtaining RAFT funds and those who are advocates working with clients like Kelly are funded with CSBG dollars.

Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc. (QCAP - Quincy)

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

A married couple with two children came to QCAP last year for free tax help. Their combined income from wage was under \$33,000 (both were high school graduates). The husband was as a maintenance worker. The wife had worked for part of the year as a medical secretary, but lost her job when the family's second vehicle broke down and they could not afford the costs of the repairs. At the time of their income tax appointment, the family was barely getting by with just the husband's income. The volunteer tax counselor completed their return and helped the couple claim the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits. The resulting refund of nearly \$4,500 meant that the family could repair the car, allowing the wife to get back to work. The tax counselor also referred the family to QCAP's food pantry and on-line food stamp application to help with expenses until the couple's income increased. The family was receiving fuel assistance. Due to the free service, the family received their full refund and avoided paying the cost of tax preparation, and possibly being persuaded to take a refund advance loan, which would have further reduced their refund.

Barriers faced by the couple included the complexity of tax laws, which kept the family from completing their own income tax returns. The couple lacked computer and Internet access, was unable to purchase software, and lacked the funds necessary to hire someone to prepare their taxes. QCAP's service enabled the family to receive a timely refund, retain their full refund, and put their money towards necessities such as car repairs.

In the spring of 2005, QCAP joined in partnership with AARP and State Street Corporation to provide free volunteer tax preparation and e-filing to low- and moderate-income taxpayers. The AARP assisted the program with recruiting and training volunteers, and providing outreach to clients. State Street Corporation provided volunteers to serve as tax counselors. All services took place in QCAP's community technology center, Learning Links.

QCAP began offering free tax counseling and e-filing at the Learning Links Technology Center to help low-income taxpayers receive eligible credits, such as the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits, and Massachusetts Circuit Breaker Credit for seniors. These tax credits seek to help low-income people maximize their incomes.

At the same time, the Internal Revenue Service and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue have worked over the past three to five years to encourage taxpayers to e-file

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their annual tax returns, as it is safer and more secure, results in faster refunds, and helps reduce costs for these agencies. One result has been an increase in paid tax preparation firms that charge taxpayers a sizeable fee to prepare and file their tax return. These firms also offer refund anticipation loans with high interest rates preying upon low-income taxpayers in need of fast cash. Such loans charge high interest rates and ultimately reduce the taxpayers credit/refund.

By offering free tax assistance and e-filing, QCAP is working to make sure low-income taxpayers can access e-filing, receive the full credit/refund they are entitled to, and avoid tax return preparation fees.

Through this program, six IRS-certified volunteer tax counselors helped a total of 131 taxpayers prepare their returns with a total of 66 federal and 58 state tax returns being e-filed. These taxpayers received over \$80,000 in allowable credits.

QCAP's Volunteer Tax Preparation Program is 100% funded by the agency's CSBG award. It is through this grant that the program is possible. The IRS provides tax preparation software and assisted in the training of two program coordinators. All other costs are paid for by QCAP through the CSBG award, including staff coordinators that manage all aspects of the program (volunteer recruitment, training and supervision), tax return review, e-filing, processing/correction of rejected returns, scheduling of appointments, confirming appointments, screening taxpayers for eligibility, and conducting program outreach. CSBG also pays for the computer equipment and network maintenance, space, and utility costs for Learning Links where the tax service is located.

Springfield Partners for Community Action, Inc. (SPCA - Springfield)

Asset Development (VITA and IDA)

Asset Development clients come from many places in Hampden County, Massachusetts. Most of the clients are low- to moderate-income people, especially those who establish Individual Development Accounts, as they have to be employed so that they can save a specific amount of money every month.

Asset Development is comprised of three separate programs that are to be used together: Individual Development Accounts (IDA), Financial Literacy, and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA). Ideally, a client begins with VITA. SPCA's IRS certified volunteer tax preparers assist clients to file taxes and help them with Earned Income Tax Credits and any other eligible credits. This results in an average refund for SPCA taxpayers of approximately \$4,000. SPCA staff members talk with clients about the importance of saving some of that money for specific goals: buying a house, investing in a small business, or continuing their education. The agency assists clients reach one of these goals through matched savings or IDAs but

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also with financial literacy, a critical component that educates them on better money management, credit building or repair, and planning and budgeting.

Ideally, a client files his/her taxes with SPCA and uses part of the refund to establish an IDA. The client will then take advantage of financial literacy workshops to better understand budgeting and overall money management and will receive case management along the way. The client's savings will be matched so that he/she can purchase a home, establish a business, or attend college. SPCA sees Asset Development as one sure way out of the cycle of poverty

Asset Development is partially funded with CSBG funds, an Assets For Independence grant, and through contributions from several local banks.

RESOURCE COORDINATION

Community Action Committee of Cape Cod and the Islands, Inc. (CACCI - Hyannis)

Operation Helping Hand

As a part of "Operation Helping Hands", CACCI coordinated a very successful disaster relief operation with the Massachusetts National Guards at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and many others. CACCI's goals for this operation were:

- ◇ To provide Homeless Prevention and Housing Search Services from CACCI's Housing Assistance Program (HAP), and
- ◇ To provide supportive services where appropriate from CACCI's Child Care Network (CCN) and Project HOPE.

Clients were victims of Hurricane Katrina who were displaced from their homes in New Orleans, Louisiana. Over 200 individuals, including families, were temporarily placed at Camp Edwards, Otis Air Force Base Cape Cod, Massachusetts. DTA requested that CACCI assist at Camp Edwards with its temporary housing initiative. CACCI administrative staff was needed to assist with the coordination of the barracks activities and connections of the evacuees with the myriad of services being offered. CACCI staff was also needed to assist with shift supervision and coverage.

CACCI's service delivery programs, Child Care Network, Housing Assistance Program, and Project HOPE were needed as clients were assessed and requested assistance with accessing health care, childcare, and assistance in finding and securing permanent housing.

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Under direction of the DTA Commissioner and his designated staff, and in cooperation with the Housing Assistance Corporation and all the state departments and agencies participating in "Operation Helping Hands", CACCI administrative staff including the Executive Director, Director of Client Services, Clinical Coordinator, Housing Assistance Program Manager, HOPE Program Director, Child Care Network Program Director, and Safe Harbor Director assist in the efforts to temporarily house and support evacuees from Hurricane Katrina.

In partnership with the various state agencies, health and human service agencies, community-based services, and local faith-based entities including Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Department of Social Services, Office for Child Care Services, Department of Education, Department of Mental Health, Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands, Visiting Nurses Association, Career Opportunity Center, Council of Churches, and Cape Cod Healthcare provide and/or assist evacuees in accessing wrap-around services to support their housing, employment, child care, health care, daily living environment, and relocation endeavors.

As a result of Operation Helping Hands, Cape Cod experienced its community networking at a level never realized before. Community agencies, volunteers, and state departments all coordinated together to respond to the needs of those displaced. This indeed was an introductory experience of how CACCI would want to respond and what the local community would need if faced with a similar disaster.

CACCI provided coordination support to DTA in partnership with Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) to set up and coordinate the logistics of providing barracks housing for the evacuees. Greeting and getting evacuees settled in their rooms; identifying and accessing immediate needs; set-up of each of the three barracks "offices"; developing protocols; and coordination with security and services that were provided. Other services included:

- ✚ Assisting a 24-hour barracks coordinator with scheduling, providing staff to cover shifts, use of administrative staff as coordinators; using administrative staff and experienced direct care staff as shift supervisors; and staff to cover shifts.
- ✚ Providing evacuees with housing options, housing search, assistance in the lease up process, and stabilization for those finding permanent housing in Massachusetts. Assisted with FEMA and MEMA rental funding applications for housing. CACCI partnered with HAC and DTA in this endeavor. Other partners included Boston Housing Authority; Department of Housing and Community Development; Mass Housing Development Partnership; and various housing developments, realtors, and landlords.
- ✚ Providing evacuees with an assessment of their child care needs in coordination with the Department of Early Education and Care and

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facilitating the intake process for evacuees with licensed child care providers and the Department of Education to place children in early education and out-of-school-time care. Evacuees were provided with contact information and assistance in order to access other early education and care resources such as the Child Care Resource and Referral Network and the Community Partnership for Children councils.

- Screening and enrolling evacuees into a public health program, link to a primary care physician and refer to other local resources for wrap-around services.

CSBG funds were allocated to CACCI's involvement in this project. There were no outside contributions to CACCI in this effort.

Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc. (CAPIC - Chelsea)

Community Schools

Chelsea Community Schools have been identified as a priority for the City of Chelsea at all local community meetings and public forums held at City Hall. CAPIC, in an effort to expand services to its client base, identified the need to become involved further in community programs, particularly for youth needing a place for after school and on weekends. Many parents have reported leaving children at home due to the lack of resources available to them. This is a dangerous scenario given the high rates of violence and related risk factors experienced by Chelsea youth. Due to the racial and ethnic diversity of the Chelsea population it is imperative to employ culturally appropriate collaborations and a multi-faceted approach to enhance opportunities, both educational and recreational, for the residents of Chelsea, strengthening family support systems and community revitalization.

CAPIC proposed to address the above-mentioned need in a formal collaboration with the City of Chelsea's Community Schools Program. Through a formal collaboration and referral system, CAPIC secured 250 slots for a cross section of Community Schools classes. The program allowed for after school access to recently built or renovated public school buildings in the City.

Discretionary funds were used to offset cost of instructors, program staff and supplies when needed.

Enrollment into winter, spring and summer sessions was conducted during three registration periods, and was managed by the Community Schools Program Manager. Over 700 community members participated in classes.

Expanded access to educational, cultural and recreational opportunities for CAPIC-referred youth and adults enhanced job readiness and civic participation, while

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reducing safety threats, crime, and violence. Therefore, the collaboration ultimately strengthened Chelsea. Together, the City of Chelsea and CAPIC will actively seek further funding to maintain this important program in an effort to continue to deliver the positive benefits to low-income and moderate-income persons residing in Chelsea.

The program was funded largely in part by the City of Chelsea. However, CSBG discretionary funds were extremely important to the success of the project. With support from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, it is CAPIC's belief that hundreds of residents, regardless of their individual circumstances and behaviors that brought them to the project, can achieve a greater sense of self-sufficiency and improve the quality of their lives, as well as the community of Chelsea.

Citizens for Citizens, Inc. (CFC - Fall River)

The Leveraging Assets for Self-Sufficiency through Energy Resources (LASER)

The LASER program was designed to help low-income households become energy self-sufficient through case-managed "one stop" services to coordinate self-sufficiency interventions and advocacy, aggressive interventions to reduce debt and resolve utility arrearages, expansion of access to benefits and resources, and programs to teach financial literacy and asset development.

The need for the program is clear. Utility costs have risen dramatically in the past few years, along with the costs of housing, food, and prescription drugs. Low- to moderate- income households have always struggled to keep current with these costs while their income has not kept pace.

The LASER Program at Citizens for Citizens, Inc., (CFC) not only provides invaluable one-on-one assistance to its clients; it has also been instrumental in establishing two entirely new services at CFC.

First, through LASER CFC, in partnership with the IRS, established a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program site during 2005. CFC provided the space, the computer terminals and high speed internet access to host and file the returns. The IRS provided the free software and training. Low and moderate income families and individuals were offered free electronic income tax preparation and filing. Many received refunds through the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

CFC staff volunteered their own time during weekday evenings to complete a total of 195 tax returns resulting in a total of \$424,549 in refunds. The average refund was \$2,333. It is estimated that this service collectively saved the clients between \$25,000 and \$30,000 in tax return preparation fees.

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The second service established through CFC's LASER program is the on-line Food Stamp application program. Through a partnership with Project Bread as well as a close relationship with the local DTA office, nearly 300 households have been applying for food stamps. This service targets fuel assistance clients who might be unaware of their eligibility for this nutrition supplemental benefit. Applications are currently completed exclusively by the LASER case manager who also assists families with follow-up and advocacy with the DTA office.

One client of the LASER program particularly demonstrates its multifaceted approach to the complex financial problems facing many clients. For instance, a single mother with a thirteen year old daughter was facing a shut off notice from the gas company. Through LASER, a portion of her arrearage was paid and a payment plan was negotiated for the balance, thus avoiding termination of her gas service. She was also referred to and enrolled in our Food Pantry to receive supplemental food to help ease food costs.

Later, this client was laid off from her part-time employment. Through LASER her fuel assistance benefit level was increased and she was referred to the local career center for employment and/or training. This led to her enrollment in a fully funded certified nursing assistant (CNA) training program which she completed. She is now employed full time as a CNA.

She also received free income tax preparation service and obtained a refund in excess of \$3,500 by utilizing the Earned Income Tax Credit. She also saved approximately \$100 in tax return preparation fees.

Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC - Fitchburg)

Neighborhood Development

In the spring of 2004, MOC along with the Fitchburg Mayor and City Council, Fitchburg State College, the Fitchburg School and Police Departments, the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, and two other community-based organizations formed a planning group to respond to the dramatic increase in drugs, crime, and violence in the City of Fitchburg. Throughout 2004 the group involved neighborhood representatives who worked together and coordinated activities including town meetings, city-wide neighborhood information and organizing forums, a Peace March, and rally aimed at unifying the city and empowering the neighborhood residents to help take responsibility for building safer and healthier neighborhoods. Events that precipitated the need for this action included six homicides in three years; 50 youth involved in a neighborhood melee; increased gang activity, including drive-by shootings and drug activity; and youth isolation.

In November 2004, the group conducted a forum including city leaders and neighborhood residents to design a community and neighborhood based structure

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entitled "Neighborhoods and You". A 25 member Steering Committee was formed from a diverse cross-section of the community representing all factions of the city that also reflected the racial and ethnic composition of the city. MOC serves as the steering committee's lead agency.

The purpose of the coalition is to organize resources, develop strategic alliances, collect and analyze data, establish city-wide strategies to prevent violence as a response to the needs and problems identified by neighborhood residents and their associations that address the causes and conditions that cause social and economic distress in the city. The group will utilize an "asset-based development strategy" that focuses on identifying and organizing resources and building knowledge and understanding of the current capabilities existing in Fitchburg and its neighborhoods.

Along with its partners, MOC received an 18 month CSBG discretionary grant in June 2005 to provide the financial support necessary to launch this project including staffing and associated administrative support. The CSBG funding helped leverage an additional funding from the Health Foundation of Central MA.

From the date of its creation until the end of the program, the Steering Committee will:

1. Develop strategies to prevent violence.
2. Develop a survey that will be used to identify resources and issues in target neighborhoods.
3. Provide results to the neighborhood representatives to help in developing 12 month work plans.
4. Develop a set of "knowledge-based intervention strategies".
5. Assist neighborhoods in developing strong democratic governance structures.
6. Provide the associations with data and statistics to help them develop more viable work plans and strategies.
7. Organize training based on the needs of the associations.
8. Help plan and organize city-wide focus groups based on the Study Circles model.
9. Establish Public Safety committees with the goal of developing citywide neighborhood based crime watches.
10. Identify and apply for funding to implement strategies developed by the neighborhood associations.

Neighborhood residents plan to create nine neighborhood associations that will support, plan, and work together to establish neighborhood based prevention strategies in the areas of youth violence, drug dealing, substance abuse, and other harmful activities.

Each neighborhood association will develop governance structures and policies and will conduct surveys that focus groups based on the Study Circles model "Building

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Strong Neighborhoods" for Public Dialogue and Community Problem Solving. Also, a public safety committee with the goal of initiating crime watches will be established. Youths will be involved in developing anti-gang activities and will participate in leadership trainings aimed at strengthening leadership in the minority and immigrant community.

South Shore Community Action Council, Inc. (SSCAC - Plymouth)

The Greater Plymouth Food Resources Group (GPFRG)

The GPFRG was formed three years ago as a response to the need to formally link community food resources as well as to address gaps in services.

SSCAC funds and staffs (part-time) a food warehouse for local pantries; provides transportation services for local food drives and for monthly food deliveries from the Greater Boston Food Bank; and convenes a quarterly meeting of area pantry providers. Partners include warehouse volunteers, local schools, boy scouts, girl scouts, church food pantries, local post offices, private foundations, Rotary members, Chamber of Commerce businesses, and a network of various other community volunteers.

GPFRG's ultimate goal is to provide more nutritious food to more hungry people in a more cost-effective way through coordinated food pick-up, transport, storage and distribution. New shared, dedicated warehouse space (the "Central Warehouse") provides GPFRG member food assistance programs the exciting opportunity to safely store frozen foods, fresh produce, dairy and other perishable foods, as well as dry food products. SSCAC has made great strides opening up food distribution avenues, raising awareness of the need for food assistance, forging key collaborations and leveraging existing resources throughout the region. Since the GPFRG formed, food assistance programs in 10 South Shore cities and towns were recruited to attend quarterly meetings and "shop" for food at the Central Warehouse. All food and non-food items are distributed free of charge. A "shopping floor model" warehouse with food sorted onto shelves according to USDA Food Guide Pyramid categories was created which helps SSCAC monitor the nutrient content of the products that is received and distributed to food assistance programs.

Since opening the Central Warehouse two years ago, donations have been solicited and then distributed over 80,000 pounds of product, translating into over 61,000 meals. Additionally, through shared trucking, our larger member pantries transport of roughly 110,000 pounds of product from the Greater Boston Food Bank, which will then be distributed to their clients throughout the Greater Plymouth area. GPFRG staff has visited member food assistance programs and conducted volunteer trainings to ensure that products are stored safely and to learn more about their clients' nutritional needs. Data is collected monthly from member food assistance programs about their client demographics and their distributions. The data is analyzed and

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shared with members to help SSCAC and the food assistance programs measure the impact, identify trends and consistently improve operations. Further, a formal Elderly Nutrition Needs Assessment was completed, which has helped identify service gaps and work with other South Shore agencies to better serve low-income seniors. To that end, SSCAC held a Greater Plymouth Forum on Elderly Nutrition in April, 2006.

YOUTH FOCUSED

Franklin Community Action Corporation, Inc. (FCAC - Greenfield)

Youth Program

Nadia began attending FCAC Youth Programs in February of 2005. As an eighth grader, Nadia was identified as a student who needed extra support in order to stay in school and succeed. Fortunately, FCAC had just created a new program that is a collaboration between FCAC Youth Programs and Head Start. Nadia applied for a position in the Head Start/Youth Mentoring Initiative as a mentor to 3 - 5 year olds enrolled at local Head Start sites.

As one of ten youth mentors, Nadia has received First Aid, CPR and child development training. She and the other mentors work in a Head Start classroom two times a week and receive a small stipend. In addition, all of the mentors meet every other week for both reflection and fun activities. As a result of their training and support, some of these mentors have gotten various child care job opportunities. None of the ten mentors have left the program in the past year - unusual for at-risk youth in this age group.

Nadia has really shined in her role as a mentor to preschool children. Her reflective demeanor has created an environment in which shy and quiet children could feel safe to engage and explore with Nadia as their guide. Nadia easily filled the role and expectations of an assistant teacher in the classroom setting. The lead teachers felt that Nadia was a dependable addition to the classroom through her professionalism and flexibility in interacting one-on-one or in small groups. Her artistic abilities proved to be an asset and provided Nadia with opportunities to learn leadership skills through her facilitation of art projects with young children.

Nadia is now a 16 year old at Turners Falls High School and an A student. Her motivation to succeed is self-directed and, while still involved in Youth Mentoring, Nadia recognized that she needed a job with an hourly wage rather than a stipend. Concurrently, FCAC Youth Programs recognized an unmet need in the community. Many of the youth that regularly attend a drop-in center run collaborative with another youth-serving organization are Russian and in need of homework assistance. At home, their parents speak only Russian and could therefore not meet the academic needs of their children. Drop-in staff felt frustrated by the limited amount of tutoring

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that they could offer the youth. Nadia, a Russian student whose mother speaks Russian at home, could easily relate to the youth that drop-in serves. Nadia had already learned group facilitation skills through youth mentoring and is a high school student that is passionate about learning; Nadia became our first choice to meet this community need.

Nadia was enrolled in YouthWorks, an FCAC Youth Programs employment program, and is now a tutor at the Drop-In Center. She continues to gain valuable work experience while engaging with other youth in a mentoring relationship. Nadia offers the drop-in center youth valuable social and academic supports, allowing them to feel a sense of belonging and continued relationship building. Nadia has become a mentor to the elementary and middle school students that attend drop-in. The youth that she is forming relationships with say, "I like when Nadia comes here. She helps me with my homework and shows me new art projects." Over the past year, Nadia has become a confident leader in the community as she becomes self-assured in her abilities. She continues to discover her goals and dreams while utilizing FCAC Youth Program staff to explore her future.

FCAC Youth Programs receives much-needed support from CSBG. Without it, these opportunities would not be available to youth like Nadia.

Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC - Fitchburg)

Fresh Start Alternative Education Program

MOC received Congressional Earmark funding through the Department of Justice (DOJ) to fund an innovative alternative education program to provide a vehicle to eliminate and shorten the length of time and the occurrence of student suspension and expulsions in the Fitchburg Junior High School System. MOC's Fitchburg Fresh Start Alternative Education Program (Fresh Start) is designed to address academic, interpersonal, and other supportive needs of suspended and expelled middle school children in Fitchburg. These youth are at high risk for inadequate school performance, early school drop-out, early justice system involvement, susceptibility to high risk behaviors, unproductive parent involvement, and a high prevalence of despondency, all of which have been correlated with delinquency. The program goals are:

- ✚ To develop a program that includes the student, family, school and MOC in continuing the student's education during his/her suspension or expulsion from school.
- ✚ To further academic studies during the suspension or expulsion period.
- ✚ To design an individualized plan which addresses the both student's academic and interpersonal needs.

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- ✚ To assure that the student is receiving the full scope of resources including case management, counseling, behavior management and other necessary support services.
- ✚ To return the student to their sending school with renewed confidence and a positive attitude toward learning.

The program has the potential to serve 16 students in an alternative education program in two classes (eight students each). Fresh Start also provides intensive case management, counseling, behavior management, and other support services to meet the individual needs, stability, and skills of the student's family. MOC works proactively with the Fitchburg Alternative Education Partners including the Fitchburg School Department, counselors, educators, Fitchburg Police Department, and parents to eliminate and shorten the length of time and the occurrence of student suspension and expulsions by implementing an individualized education plan that optimizes learning and growth.

The program has had remarkable success demonstrated by achievement in scholastic performance: 18 students were enrolled in the program of which 15 have returned from expulsion with no loss of academic standing; 14 have returned to school at the appropriate grade level, and test assessments conducted after 50 hours of instruction indicate marked improvement in grade level skills, and letter grades show at least one grade improvement. Individual student behavior improvement is demonstrated by: 15 students complying with their individual service plans; there were only 45 disciplinary incidents compared to 216 occurring while attending their sending schools; individual recidivism is reduced with eight suspensions given to four students which is a decrease from the 40+ received by the 18 students prior to attending this program, two of the four students were found eligible for Special Education; and seven students had encounters with the juvenile justice system, all of whom had previous involvement. Reduction in risky behavior is demonstrated through pre- and post-tests indicating an increase in student knowledge in the areas of adolescent development, conflict resolution, and self-advocacy; and health risk assessments indicated 13 students showed positive decision-making in this area. Family support also showed dramatic improvement by 15 of the 18 parents/guardians meeting compliance in involvement and demonstrating consistent, appropriate involvement with improvement in their parenting skills and 15 families have demonstrated and maintained positive movement along the MOC Family Self-Sufficiency Scales and Ladders assessment tool.

Total DOJ funding for the program is \$148,422 supported by \$30,000 through the Fitchburg School Department, and CSBG funds that support the program's management. DOJ funds are available for one year and alternative funding is being sought to fund this highly successful initiative.

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SENIOR FOCUSED

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD - Boston)

Discount Drug Card Program

Before the launch of the federal prescription drug benefit (Medicare Part D), seniors had the opportunity to obtain a Medicare discount drug card that provided discounts off the full price of certain medications. In October of 2004, the Elder Services department at ABCD received a grant from the National Council on Aging (NCoA) to form a coalition of providers, government agencies, and advocates to help seniors select and sign up for the discount drug card and low-income benefit program, which gave low-income seniors up to \$1,200 towards their prescription bills. Major coalition partners included Catholic Charities, Mass. Senior Action, Boston Partnership for Older Adults, the City of Boston SHINE program, and Kit Clark Senior Center in Boston. In addition, other community action agencies such as Tri-City Community Action Program, Quincy Community Action Programs, and the Montachusett Opportunity Council took part in coalition activities and events and received training.

To reach eligible seniors, presentations about the discount cards were given at senior centers, senior lunch programs, Neighborhood Service Centers, Area Planning Action Councils, and other places where seniors congregate. The discount drug card program partnered with ABCD's own Foster Grandparents program, training the foster grandparents to become peer counselors who could help other seniors understand the discount drug card.

Special events were planned to share effective techniques ABCD had learned when enrolling seniors for the discount drug card. Policy seminars such as "Lessons Learned: Going from the Discount Drug Card to the Prescription Drug Benefit" was offered to outside educators and senior advocates in conjunction with The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Due to the success of educating seniors on the discount drug card, the coalition was asked by the Massachusetts Association for Community Action to present their outreach and enrollment methods to other community action directors. The Director of the Elder Services Department was later invited by the federal Office of Community Services to present her experiences at the annual National Community Action Foundation conference in September of 2005. ABCD's success in reaching seniors so effectively established the agency as the choice to lead the outreach effort for the actual Medicare Part D program, which is still successful.

A Planner from the Planning department at ABCD, whose salary is paid through CSBG, provided technical consultation to the Elder Services department to assist with the assembly of the coalition and development of an effective education and enrollment

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strategy for reaching seniors and successfully enrolling them in the discount drug card program.

Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. (GLCAC - Lawrence)

Project Senior

This project was started during FY 2005 in response to needs identified by the Lawrence Senior Center, the local Elder Services Program and the local Consumer Protection Office.

The local organizations serving elders receive on average 15-20 inquiries a month seeking resources for home modifications, repairs, or ramp installations. Additionally, there is an increasing number of elders and disabled individuals who report overpriced and uncompleted work by contractors to the State's Attorney General's office and/or the Consumer Protection Program.

Initially Project Senior was based on the "Christmas in April" concept, in which volunteers of all skill levels would commit a Saturday in the Spring and Fall to help the elderly and disabled with home maintenance/small repair projects. The goal of Project Senior was twofold:

- 1) To address the underserved needs of the low-income elder and/or disabled homeowner population in Lawrence in order to enable them to remain in their homes; and
- 2) To foster the spirit of volunteerism and community development within the city of Lawrence by attracting and gathering people from all walks of life.

In 2005 GLCAC, Inc., targeted one district in Lawrence for services based on a needs assessment via the Neighborhood Associations. Project SENIOR began activities under the dual coordination of the GLCAC, Inc., Planning & Program Development Office and the Lawrence/Methuen Community Coalition. During the spring of 2005, three Project Senior work sessions were conducted with volunteers from the GLCAC, Inc., the Neighborhood Associations and from Cisco Systems/Boston CARES. After these first sessions with volunteers were conducted, it was readily apparent that not all of the repairs requested by the elders could be completed by volunteers. Gradually, the GLCAC, Inc.'s Assistant Planning Director (who is also a licensed building contractor) began to take on the task of directly performing the more complicated repairs (i.e. replacing railings, reinforcing staircases, replacing storm windows). In the fall of 2005, several more group sessions were held with students from local high schools and church groups volunteering to do yard maintenance for some of the elders. In all, 34 senior homeowners were assisted. Satisfaction surveys completed by the elders including comments such as:

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"I can't thank everyone enough. These jobs have taken so much stress away from me."

"What a beautiful group of people. Thank you, thank you, and thank you."

"Today they made me very happy. Thank you. I am 94 years old."

"Thank you! The help you give is so appreciated. The expenses are such today for an elderly homeowner, we find it easy to give in and sell."

To date, funding to support Project SENIOR has been received from the City of Lawrence Community Development Block Grant, the Wells Fargo Foundation, and the Sovereign Bank. In addition, Project SENIOR received a donation from Cisco to match the value of the hours volunteered by their employees. CSBG funds played an integral part in the project's success in that CSBG funds support the work of the GLCAC, Inc., Planning and Program Development office. The Planning and Development office has been responsible for coordinating and in some cases directly performing the activities of Project SENIOR.

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APPENDIX 1: CAA KEY FINANCIAL INDICATORS

CAA Reported Expenditures (Selected Funding Categories)

Federal Resources	Fiscal Year 2004 ¹⁷	Fiscal Year 2005 ¹⁸
Amount of CSBG Allocated	\$14,331,748	\$14,175,220
Weatherization (DOE)	\$6,918,950	\$7,413,373
LIHEAP – Fuel Assistance	\$65,184,356	\$70,574,422
LIHEAP – Weatherization (HEARTWAP)	\$4,840,136	\$6,119,934
Head Start	\$69,633,504	\$68,761,567
Early Head Start	\$5,929,411	\$5,194,220
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	\$4,255,319	3,538,590
Child Care Development Block Grant	\$39,272,868	\$54,052,108
Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)	\$9,575,581	\$14,196,421
Housing Programs (Section 8 & 202)	\$23,948,097	\$20,344,660
	\$825,632	\$699,026
All other HUD including homeless programs	\$15,596,026	\$19,206,263
Corporation for National Services programs	\$2,437,458	\$2,119,318

State Resources	Fiscal Year 2004	Fiscal Year 2005
State housing and homeless programs	\$13,724,795	\$17,274,416
State nutrition programs	\$1,931,123	\$190,419
State energy programs	\$702,485	\$6,654,355
State early childhood programs	\$49,666,458	\$65,631,757
State Head Start program	\$5,434,646	\$5,153,849

Local Public Resources	Fiscal Year 2004	Fiscal Year 2005
Funds from foundations, corporations	\$21,954,327	\$28,004,661
Fees paid by clients	\$13,774,376	\$14,434,232
Value of volunteer hours	\$5,599,229	\$4,655,940

¹⁷ 25 CAAs reported.

¹⁸ 24 CAAs reported expenditures. The CSBG amount includes 25 CAAs.

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APPENDIX 2: FY 2004 FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL GUIDELINES

Persons in family or household	100% of FPL	125% of FPL	150% of FPL	175% of FPL	200% of FPL
1	\$ 9,310	\$ 11,638	\$ 13,965	\$ 16,293	\$ 18,620
2	\$ 12,490	\$ 15,613	\$ 18,735	\$ 21,858	\$ 24,980
3	\$ 15,670	\$ 19,588	\$ 23,505	\$ 27,423	\$ 31,340
4	\$ 18,850	\$ 23,563	\$ 28,275	\$ 32,988	\$ 37,700
5	\$ 22,030	\$ 27,538	\$ 33,045	\$ 38,553	\$ 44,060
6	\$ 25,210	\$ 31,513	\$ 37,815	\$ 44,118	\$ 50,420
7	\$ 28,390	\$ 35,488	\$ 42,585	\$ 49,683	\$ 56,780
8	\$ 31,570	\$ 39,463	\$ 47,355	\$ 55,248	\$ 63,140
***	\$ 3,180	\$ 3,975	\$ 4,770	\$ 5,565	\$ 6,360

*** Each additional person

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APPENDIX 3: MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

Community Action Agencies	Location
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.	BOSTON
Action, Inc.	GLOUCESTER
Berkshire Community Action Council, Inc.	PITTSFIELD
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.	SOMERVILLE
Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands	HYANNIS
Community Action, Inc.	HAVERHILL
Community Action Programs, Inter-City, Inc.	CHELSEA
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.	CAMBRIDGE
Citizens for Citizens, Inc.	FALL RIVER
Community Teamwork, Inc.	LOWELL
Franklin Community Action Corporation	GREENFIELD
Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc.	LAWRENCE
Lynn Economic Opportunity, Inc.	LYNN
Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc.	FITCHBURG
North Shore Community Action Programs, Inc.	PEABODY
People Acting in Community Endeavors, Inc.	NEW BEDFORD
Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc.	QUINCY
Self-Help, Inc.	AVON
South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.	FRAMINGHAM
Springfield Partners for Community Action, Inc.	SPRINGFIELD
South Shore Community Action Council, Inc.	PLYMOUTH
Tri-City Community Action Program, Inc.	MALDEN
Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.	HOLYOKE
Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.	WORCESTER

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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